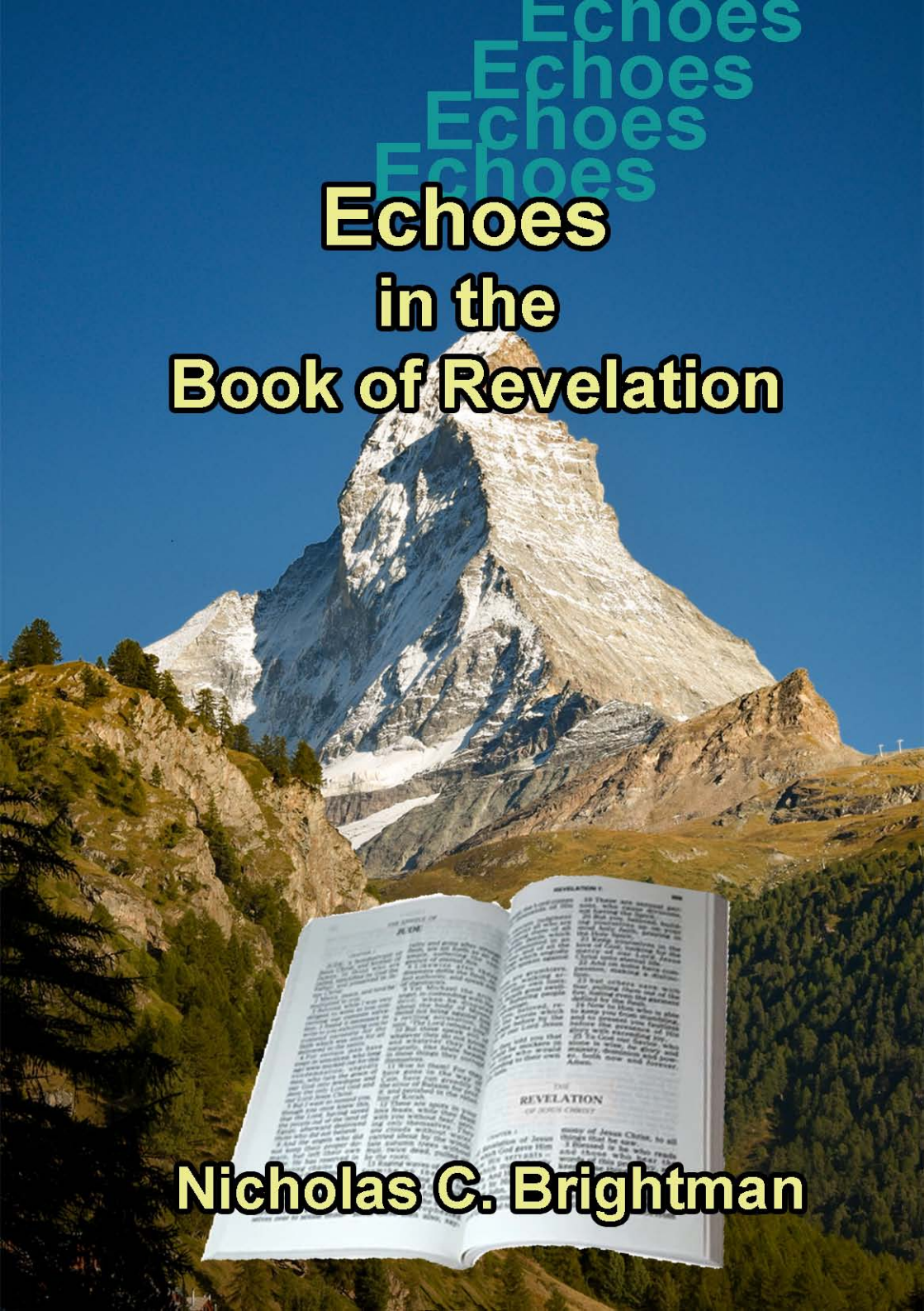
Echoes in the Book of Revelation



Nicholas C. Brightman

ECHOES

IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION

by

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Introduction

Much of the Book of Revelation alludes to, or echoes, the Hebrew Scriptures. The author, John the Apostle, was a Jew who was raised on the Hebrew Scriptures - what we call the Old Testament. When the New Testament refers to 'Scripture' (for example, 2 Timothy 3:16) it is referring to the Old Testament. The term 'Old Testament' is neither a good, nor an accurate title for the Hebrew Scriptures because it lends to the idea that they are somehow outdated; in our commercialized world new is presented as better.

As far as the Scriptures are concerned nothing could be further from the truth. The Hebrew Scriptures are as meaty today as they were to Moses. It is true that their function has changed a little, for we no longer need to refer to them to know what sacrifices we must make on a particular occasion. Nevertheless we can use them today to find Jesus; for as the Master said, *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me* (John 5:39). The Book of Revelation is above all a book about Jesus, and what better way of getting to know Him than through the Hebrew Bible.

When John wrote the Revelation, it was the Hebrew culture that shaped his worldview, and the Hebrew Scriptures formed the basis for his understanding of God. Thus the ideas he presents and the imagery he uses can be better understood by looking at them through his eyes. As we read this wonderful book we continually find references to the Hebrew Scriptures. Some are unmistakable, (compare for example Revelation 13:5-9 with Daniel 7:25), others are distant (for example compare Revelation 2:3 with Isaiah 40:31).

This work is primarily a reference tool rather than a book to be read from cover to cover. Its primary purpose is to look for the echoes of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures in the Book of Revelation.

As mentioned before some of these are subtle, and there is a danger of being overly subjective. Some may disagree with me, and others may hear echoes my ears failed to detect. Nevertheless there is a rich reward for the reader in understanding John's visions when he or she can be directed back to the ideas that would have come to his mind as he saw them.

This book is not a commentary; it only refers to the echo and provides a brief note. For my commentary on the book of Revelation, see *A Revelation of the Revelation*

https://archive.org/details/a-revelation-of-the-revelation

May God bless the reader.

Nicholas C. Brightman

Chapter 1

1:3
Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Echo: Luke 11:28. *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

Note: These are the words of Jesus when an unidentified woman, deeply moved by the wisdom and authority of His teaching, cried out, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked (Luke 11:27).*

1:4
John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

Echo: Exodus 3:14. *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

Note: The expression '*which is, and which was, and which is to come*' is translated from the Greek '*ho ōn ho ēn ho erchomenos.* The first part, *ho ōn - which is,* is also used in the Septuagint, the early Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, to translate the renowned name that God uses of Himself in Exodus 3:14, *I AM*. It is worthy of note that while

Revelation 1:4 refers to God the Father who is, who always has been, and who ever will be, Jesus also referred to Himself as *I am* in his discourse with the Jews in John 8:58, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* In that Christ is The Word made flesh (John 1:14), and the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9), was it not Jesus who appeared to Moses at the burning bush?

1:6

And hath made us <u>kings and priests</u> unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Echo: **Exodus 19:6.** *And ye shall be unto me <u>a kingdom of priests</u>, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

Note: There were three in Israel who were anointed to their calling; prophets, priests and kings. The prophet's role was to represent God to the people; he (or in a few cases, she) was God's spokesman before the people. The priest, conversely, was anointed to come before God on behalf of the people – to plead for them, or to intercede for them; the priest was the people's spokesman before God. The king was anointed to lead the people in affairs of state. However, it had not been God's original intention for Israel to have a king. God Himself was to have been their King, ruling the land, and through their faithful witness, ruling the world, under a loving theocracy. But now God says we are all priests who serve under Jesus Christ, the true Prophet, the heavenly High Priest, the King of kings, our Creator and Redeemer. We are, as Peter says, a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9). Our role is one of service to mankind, and one of intercession for others, not only to pray for them, but to lead them to the great High Priest who atones for them in the heavenly sanctuary. See also 1:8.

1:7
Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and <u>they also which pierced him</u>: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Echo: **Zechariah 12:10.** *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: <u>and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced</u>, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*

Note: The piercing here refers to the entire process of the crucifixion. Yet there is one aspect of it that is highly significant though little understood. Of the New Testament writers, it is the Apostle John alone who notes the significance of Christ's being pierced with a spear when upon the cross. In John 19:31-37 he mentions the spearing and that it was prophesied by Zechariah. He also notes that both blood and water came from the wound. Can we learn what it was John understood by this incident?

The key that unlocks this mystery is the Feast of Tabernacles, the last of the annual sacred Jewish festivals. The Day of Atonement brought reconciliation between God and man, for the people were then at peace with heaven, their sins atoned for. Therefore the subsequent festival, Tabernacles, was one of celebration, for God Himself was coming to dwell among men. In fact it was the only festival in which God commanded the people to be joyful. The people were to go to Jerusalem, and there to make shelters out of palm fronds and olive branches and live in them for the entire week. All over Jerusalem were these shelters, or booths, and the atmosphere was one of people in holiday mode, enjoying themselves and catching up with old friends.

The highlight of the Feast of Tabernacles was on the final day, a Sabbath. It is described by John as 'that great day of

the feast''. On that day the crowds were even greater, all those that couldn't make it during the week made sure they came for the final day. On that day a special ceremony was performed: the priest, accompanied by the sound of the *shofar* – the ram's horn – and amid the joyful cries of "Hosanna" from the people, would go down from the temple and out of the city to the Kidron Valley to draw water from the Pool of Siloam in a special pitcher. Then the procession, amid song and praise and the cry of the *shofar*, would return to the temple court where there were two silver basins on the altar. These basins acted as funnels which emptied into a conduit that ran down through the people and back out into the Kidron Valley. The priest then poured this water into one of the silver basins, and new wine into the other. The two liquids were then allowed to run down the conduit where the people could see them. Thus as the two basins emptied into the conduit the water and the wine mixed together and became one.

As the people watched the water running down the conduit, it reminded them of the day in the wilderness when Moses had struck the rock and water had poured from it. That day God had given His people living Water. That rock was a symbol of Him who by His death would cause living streams of salvation to flow to all who thirst for it. The water that fed the Pool of Siloam was like that. The Spring of Gihon in the Kidron valley bubbled from the ground in all its purity from where it ran into the Pool. It was that water which the priest used to fill the pitcher on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles.

But by the last day of the festival the people were tired. Camping is great, but after a week in tents you are ready for home. Privacy becomes a problem, and prices are inflated. Above all they were not being fed spiritually. The truths taught by this festival were all but lost in the commercialism that attended the festival, just as the true meaning of Christmas is obscured today. The fun was wearing off and there was a feeling of emptiness which would not have been

there if the people had better understood the spiritual significance of the festival.

Jesus attended the last day of the festival, and was among the crowd as the priest poured the living water of Siloam, along with the new wine, into the basins on the altar. He watched as the water coursed its way down the channel, and realising how the commercialism of the event had obscured its true significance, He knew He must not lose the moment: Jumping up and making Himself visible to the entire crowd He cried out at the top of His voice, "*If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him".* According to John's narrative in Chapter 7 of his Gospel, this action caused great dissension amongst the people, and ultimately led to his condemnation – the stricken Rock. Yet Christ saw this invitation as so important that He offered it again in the very last words of the Bible, again through John: *And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely* (Revelation 22:17).

1:8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Echo: Isaiah 44:6. *Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Echo: Isaiah 48:12. *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

Note: See 1:17

1:10

I was in the Spirit on <u>the Lord's day,</u> and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

Echo: **Exodus 20:10.** *But the seventh day is <u>the sabbath of the LORD thy God</u>: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*

Echo: **Isaiah 58:13.** *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on <u>my holy day</u>; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt* honour *him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:*

Echo: **Mark 2:28.** *Therefore <u>the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath</u>*. See also Matthew 12:8.

Note: Tradition has led the expression 'The Lord's Day' to refer to Sunday. Yet the New Testament was completed long before such a tradition was devised. Had Sunday been intended by John, it would have meant that Sunday had replaced the Sabbath even while John was still alive; something that certainly did not happen. In apostolic days Christians were primarily of Jewish descent and were jealous for the Law of God, Hence the objection of many of them to the findings of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) that Gentile converts need not be circumcised. Had there been a move to change one of the Ten Commandments by changing the Sabbath to Sunday, the outcry would have been overwhelming. Yet there is no mention of such an event.

It is possible however, that the expression, 'the Lord's day' refers, not to the Sabbath, but to 'the Day of the Lord', in other words, the return of Christ. This would mean that John was shown a vision concerning the end times. This is logical given that the book of Revelation is about just that, but it runs

into a difficulty with the Greek expression used. The Greek is, *kuriakē hēmera,* and is used only this one time. The expression, 'Day of the Lord', when used in the New Testament, is always translated, *hēmera tou kuriou* or *hēmera kuriou.* This may be simply a matter of John's schoolboy Greek, for any student of New Testament Greek quickly discerns that John's Greek is quite amateurish when compared with that of, for example, the Apostle Paul.

If John did intend to write *hēmera tou kuriou* or *hēmera kuriou,* then our echoes are somewhat different and refer to the great day when God will finally establish His kingdom on earth. There are too many references to quote them all here, there being 18 in the Hebrew Scriptures and 5 in the New Testament. They are as follows: Isaiah 2:12, 13:6,9; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5, 13:3; Joel 1:15, 2:1,11,31, 3:14; Amos 5:18,20; Obadiah 15; Zephaniah 1:7,14; Zechariah 14:1; Malachi 4:5; Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:2, 2 Peter 3:10.

1:12

And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw <u>seven golden candlesticks;</u>

Echo: **Exodus 25:31-37.** *And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. [32]And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: [33]Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. [34]And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. [35]And there shall be a knop*

under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. [36]Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. [37]And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.

Note: This is the first of Revelation's innumerable references to the Sanctuary that God instructed Moses to make in the wilderness. In fact so much of the Book of Revelation refers to the Sanctuary, or Temple, that it becomes important for us to understand something of its function and symbolism.

The Sanctuary first established by Moses in the desert, and later by King Solomon at Jerusalem was the central feature of Hebrew worship. It consisted essentially of two apartments separated from each other by a curtain. In the first apartment, known as the Holy Place, there were three items of furniture; the table containing 12 loaves of bread, the altar of incense, and the Menorah or seven-branched lamp stand. The second apartment, known as the Most Holy Place, contained just one piece of furniture, the Ark of the Covenant that held within it the stone tables of the Law – the Ten Commandments - given by God Himself. Into this apartment, only the High Priest could come, and then only once per year on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement – or Judgment Day.

Thus the first apartment represented intercession and the second judgment. In the first apartment the priest would minister daily presenting the sins of the people before God for forgiveness. Yet forgiveness of sin does not fully deal with the sin problem. Just as the purging of an infectious disease must involve not only the treatment of those affected, but the total eradication of the pathogen, so God, in dealing with sin, not only forgives us our sins, but finally rids the world of sin. Thus into the second apartment the high priest would, on *Yom Kippur,* take the blood of the sacrificial goat representing the sins of the people, and sprinkle it before the Ark of the

Covenant. When he came out, the sins of the people would be placed symbolically on the head of another goat, the scapegoat, which would then be taken far out into the desert and left there, thus symbolising the permanent removal of sin from the people.

So we see that the sanctuary services conducted in the wilderness, and later in Solomon's Temple, were a type of what God is doing for us all in heaven. The Being that John sees walking among the lamp stands identifies Himself in verse 18 as none other that Jesus Christ. The Book of Hebrews explains the role of Christ as our great High Priest who intercedes for us in the heavenly Temple. Thus John's vision here shows Christ as our Mediator and Intercessor in the first apartment, the Holy Place. As we progress through the book of Revelation we shall also see Jesus our High Priest move from the Holy to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, for there come a time when mercy ends and judgment begins - a heavenly *Yom Kippur*. Lest this sound overly ominous, let the reader understand that for those who have accepted Christ's mediation, and whose sins are forgiven, judgment holds no fears; when the judge is also the defence attorney there is no need to fear the judgment.

1:13

And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one <u>like unto the Son of man</u>, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and <u>girt about the paps with a golden girdle.</u>

Echo: **Daniel 7:13.** *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the <u>Son of man</u> came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.*

Note: The expression 'son of man' is used some 108 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, by far the majority (93) in the Book of Ezekiel . In each case the reference is to a human being, and

usually is the term God uses in addressing an individual. However, the expression 'like the Son of man' is found only in Daniel 7:13, and Revelation 1:13. In each case the expression may simply mean 'in human form', but seems to suggest a Being who is more than simply a man. Later in this chapter we will see another allusion to Daniel 7 which will help us understand that in both Daniel and Revelation it is none other than Jesus Christ who is the One referred to.

Echo: **Isaiah 22:20, 21.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.*

Note: This passage refers to one Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, who is dressed in a robe and wears a girdle, or sash. Eliakim is the gatekeeper in Jerusalem, and no one can enter the city except through him. In this way he is a type of Christ, the only name through which anyone can enter the kingdom of heaven, the New Jerusalem. We shall learn more of Hilkiah when we study the letter to the church in Philadelphia, for there we will see that is it also Christ who holds the keys to the city of David.

1:14
<u>His head and his hairs were white like wool</u>, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Echo: **Daniel 7:9.** *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.*

Note: We have referred to this passage in 1:13, for they both describe the same heavenly being.

1:15

<u>And his feet like unto fine brass</u>, as if they burned in a furnace; <u>and his voice as the sound of many waters.</u>

Echo: **Daniel 10:5, 6.** *Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: [6]His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in* colour *to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

Note: The echo in this verse is not to the one 'like a Son of man', but to a glorious Being who comes to Daniel to explain the meaning of a vision to him. The description of this being suggests it is also Christ who comes to Daniel. It seems that God takes many forms and many names, perhaps according to the role He is performing at the time. He is also referred to as Michael in Daniel 10:14, and 'the great prince' in Daniel 12:1. Could it be that when in an intercessory role He is the 'Son of Man', and when He undertakes the role of warrior He is Michael, meaning 'who is like God'?

The Being of Daniel 10: 5, 6 has two characteristics in common with Revelation 1:15; they are his feet and his voice. However, Daniel also noted the gold on His loins. This may refer to the golden sash seen by John.

1:16

<u>And he had in his right hand seven stars</u>: and out <u>of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword:</u> and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

Echo: On the seven stars, see 1:20

Echo: **Ephesians 6:17.** *And take the helmet of* salvation*, and <u>the</u> sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Note: In Revelation 1:16 Jesus is described as having a two-edged sword coming from His mouth. This immediately brings to mind the Apostle Paul's famous counsel to the Ephesians to carry *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God* (Ephesians 6:17). Thus we may understand the sword to represent the Word of God. The original language describes the sword not as two-edged, but as two-mouthed (*rhomphaia distomos*). Similarly in the Hebrew Scriptures, as for example in Judges 3:16 and Proverbs 5:4, a sword, though correctly translated into English as two-edged, is described in the original language as two-mouthed. The idea conveyed seems to be that the sword is used to devour ones enemies. Perhaps this helps us to understand better this strange image of Christ with a sword in his mouth rather than in His hand.

1:17

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; <u>I am the first and the last</u>.

Echo: **Isaiah 44:6.***Thus saith the LORD the* King *of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Echo: **Isaiah 48:12.** *Hearken unto me, O Jacob* and *Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

Note: Similar to 1:8 and 11, except that it is translated from the Hebrew. The *Alpha and Omega* of verses 8 and 11 is taken from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. There is an interesting interplay between God the Father and God the Son in these verses. Verse 8 suggests that God the Father is the speaker, yet the same expression used in Revelation 1:11 and 22:13 make it clear that the Alpha and

Omega, the First and the Last, is Christ. Similarly Isaiah 44:6 contains the same ambiguity; the words 'the LORD', when in capitals refers to the consonants used to write God's name, YHWH. This is usually translated as Jehovah, or Yahweh, but because the early Hebrew language did not use vowels, and because devout Jews do not like to refer to God by name, only the consonants are written. Yet this verse also refers to YHWH as the Redeemer, a title usually attributed to Christ. So who is speaking here, the Father or the Son? In the Book of Revelation both are the First and the Last, and according to Isaiah, both say there is no God beside 'me'.

The nature of the Godhead is a mystery to man, one that he has never been able to explain. Perhaps one way God has helped us grasp this unfathomable relationship is through His joining of Adam and Eve together in marriage, observing that they were now one flesh. Two separate individuals, yet one in spirit, purpose and flesh. Christianity is seen by other faiths as blasphemous because of this teaching. Yet Jesus Himself was considered blasphemous when He proclaimed before a hostile crowd, *"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I am"* (John 8:58).

1:20

The mystery of <u>the seven stars</u> which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. <u>The seven stars</u> are the angels of the seven churches: and <u>the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.</u>

Echo: **Amos 5:8.** *Seek him that maketh* the *seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and* maketh *the day* dark *with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:*

Note: The seven stars, first mentioned in 1:16, are here identified as the angels, or messengers, of the seven churches. Therefore

there appears to be no direct connection with the seven stars mentioned in Amos 5:8. Yet a deeper look at these words of Amos reveals some similarities between his message to Israel and Christ's message in the book of Revelation. Amos was a prophet sent to the northern kingdom of Israel at a time when King Jeroboam, in order to stop his subjects returning to Jerusalem to worship the true God, set up two golden calves for the people to worship. This he did in the full knowledge that it was the setting up of a golden calf by Aaron that so provoked God in the days of the Exodus. "*Behold thy gods, O Israel,"* he says, *"which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt"* (1 Kings 12:28). Amos the fearless herdsman is sent by God to point out the folly and consequence of such idolatry. His message seeks to return the people to a worship of God the Creator; "*Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion",* he cries out.

During the final days of earth's history a system of false worship will be established. This system, which is revealed in Revelation 13, describes a mighty beast that demands to be worshipped by every inhabitant of the earth. God's response is to send another Amos into the world; a bold, yet humble, messenger who will fearlessly call the earth's inhabitants to a worship of God the Creator saying with a loud voice, "*Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters"* (Revelation 14:7).

Our echo links the seven stars with the constellation Orion (the hunter). There is in fact a seven-starred constellation known as the Pleiades. It forms a part of the constellation Taurus (the bull), which lies adjacent to Orion, and is one of the more easily identified and beautiful star groups. Thus an indignant God asks Job, "*Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"* (Job 38:31).

By this question God claims creatorship of, not only of our planet, but of the entire visible universe. In Isaiah 40:26 God

claims to have created the stars and to have named each one of them: *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.* Similarly the Psalmist records, *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names* (Psalm 147:4).

If God named the stars, can we know what He named them? Well, to learn God's name for the Pleiades and Orion, we can simply turn to a Hebrew Concordance on Job 38:31 which tells us that Pleiades is *Kiymah*, and Orion is *Keseel*. But what do those words mean? According to 19th Century scholar, Frances Rolleston[1], *Kiymah* means 'Congregation of the Judge', and *Keseel* means 'Mighty One'. Rolleston suggested in her 1862 book *Mazzaroth* (meaning zodiac – see Job 38:32) that the stars and constellations were named by God in order to reveal to mankind the conflict between good and evil, and the eventual victory by the coming Messiah. Thus Orion, representing the Messiah stands with His foot on the serpent[2] having crushed its head (Genesis 3:15), and holds in His hand the skin of a lion that He has slain (1 Peter 5:8). The Pleiades are a part of the constellation Taurus meaning, according to Rolleston, 'Coming to Rule', and represent Christ the Judge. This theme has been since popularized by other writers who have based their books on Rolleston's linguistic scholarship[3].

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1 Rolleston Frances, Mazzaroth or Constellations. London: Rivingtons, Waterloo Place, 1862

2 Traditionally a serpent, but in modern astrology, a hare.

3 See for example Kenneth C. Fleming, God's Voice in the Stars: Zodiac Signs and Bible Truth, Loizeaux Brothers Inc., Neptune, 1981, and Bullenger, E.W. Witness of the Stars. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel , 1893, 1967.

A third star mentioned by name in the Bible is Arcturus in Job 9:9 and 38:32. The Hebrew name is *Ash* meaning 'To Assemble Together', and it is the brightest star in the constellation Boötes which depicts a herdsman herding the two bears (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor) into a pen. The traditional names of many of the stars in these constellations suggest that the bears were originally sheep. Thus in Boötes Christ is seen as the Shepherd.

Similarly all the stars and constellations have meaning and a story to tell, not in astrological terms, but as the Gospel. Unfortunately, as with all truth given us by God, the Enemy has corrupted the Mazzaroth and reduced it to fantastical Greek mythology with no more function than as a worthless horoscope. The psalmist declared, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handwork* (Psalm 19:1). *The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory* (Psalm 97:6). So the stars reveal the conflict between Good and Evil, and were a voice of hope to early mankind that one day sin and Satan would be eradicated, and that the earth would one day be restored to that which it was prior to the Fall.

Echo: On the seven candlesticks, see 1:12

Chapter 2

2:1
Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth <u>the seven stars</u> in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of <u>the seven golden candlesticks.</u>

Echo: On the seven stars, see 1:20

Echo: On the seven candlesticks, see 1:12

2:3

<u>And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.</u>

Echo: **Isaiah 40:31.** *But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Note: A distant echo to be sure; a 'that reminds me of' text rather than some of the intentional allusions we have seen so far. Yet Isaiah's words fitly apply to the Ephesian church members for these are they who have learned to wait upon the Lord, and well fit the character of those Isaiah was referring to.

2:4

<u>Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.</u>

Echo: **Deuteronomy 6:4, 5.** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Note: When asked what was the greatest of all the commandments, Jesus replied, *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.* (Mark 12:29-31). He was saying that nothing in life is more important than to love God. This is what the Ephesian church had forgotten.

How many new Christians have discovered the ecstasy of forgiven sins and the newness of life in Christ, only to fall back into taking these things for granted as the years go by? During those exciting days of discovery, we spend all our spare hours with the Word of God. Yet gradually other interests creep in and one day we realize that novels are more interesting than the Bible; that a movie is more appealing than a church outreach program. When that happens we too have lost our first love. God is no longer Number One.

What a unique God is ours that He needs to be loved. No pagan deity ever demanded such a thing. Did any other god ever want to be loved? What can we learn about God from His deep longing to be loved by His people? We too yearn to be loved, especially by our children and grandchildren. How much we hurt when they disobey us, or turn their back on us. Is that how God is?

There is a clue in Deuteronomy 6:4 that gives us a glimpse into the mind and nature of God. The passage, known by Jews as the *Shema,* emphasizes the Oneness of God. Yet what kind of 'One' is He? Is He a lonely, isolated God, existing on His own in the universe? Obviously not, for He has created all that is in the universe. Or is He simply emphasizing His monotheistic nature to remind us that there are no other gods? Is there more to God's Oneness than just monotheism?

There are two words used in the Biblical Hebrew that are translated 'one' in English. The first is *yahid*, meaning 'unique', or 'one of a kind'. The second is *ehad*, meaning 'united'. We might expect that *yahid* better fits the context of the *Shema,* for God certainly is unrivaled Yet the Oneness of God in the *Shema* is not *yahid,* but *ehad*, suggesting not uniqueness, but unitedness. Interestingly the word *ehad* is also used to describe a man and a woman once they marry: *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one* (ehad) *flesh*

(Genesis 2:24). Thus the relationship between a man and a woman helps us understand the social unity of God; that He represents community rather than individuality. He did not say, Let me make man in my image, but *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness* (Genesis 1:26). There is only one God, but He is not a singularity; He is a plurality. Love is the basis of God's theocracy. Not just our love for Him, but first of all, His love for us. He does not demand our love in order to love us, but has first so loved us that He would risk all of heaven to bring us into a right relationship with Him. *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee (Jeremiah 31:3).*

2:7

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Echo: 1 John 5:3, 4. *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Note: Jesus tells us that the tree of life is for the overcomer. What did He mean by that? What is it we have to overcome? The echo passage tells us it is the world we must overcome. The Apostle Paul tells us that it is evil that must be overcome. He says: *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good* (Romans 12:20). John tells us elsewhere that it is the wicked one we must overcome (1 John 2:13 ,14).

We can readily understand the need to overcome the evil one, Satan. This of course can be done only through a connection with Christ; we cannot do it in our own strength. But why the world? Is the world our enemy? We cannot escape the world; we have to live in it. Christ often referred to Satan as 'the prince of this world'. Since Satan overcame Adam he has

been the landlord of this planet, and his despotic rule has been one desperate attempt to gain the loyalty of all its citizens. Satan will use any ploy that gains the allegiance of mankind to himself, no matter whether it be by fear or flattery, by poverty or by possessions. Could he lure his victim away from godliness by giving money, success, fame, or power, he will happily do it.

Thus the world is a battleground between good and evil, and not one of us can avoid it except in death. It is in this sense that we overcome the world; by maintaining our allegiance to God and to Christ no matter what temptations and allurements come our way. Satan is a student of human nature and knows exactly where our weak spots lie; money, food, sex, entertainment. These he will present us if by them he can turn our allegiance away from the instruction of God's Word, the Holy Bible.

In Greek grammar a verb in the present tense may be *aorist*, denoting a single event, or *continuous*, denoting an ongoing action. A good example of the use of the *aorist* is in Matthew 6:10, *Thy kingdom come,* in which Christ tells us to pray for a singular event, the coming of His kingdom, i.e. the Second Advent. The word 'overcome', on the other hand, is *present continuous* and suggests that we must keep on overcoming. The Christian life is one of continual spiritual warfare in which the sword is not laid down until that great day when all wrongs are made right.

Echo: **Genesis 2:9.** *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

Note: Apart from some references in the book of Proverbs, the tree of life is mentioned only at the very beginning, and at the very end, of the Bible. It was placed at the centre of the Garden of Eden. After the first couple sinned and were driven from the Garden, God prevented their further access to the tree, for

God said, *Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever* (Genesis 3:22). What happened to the Tree of Life? After Adam was driven from the garden, it remained, guarded by powerful angels so than sin could never enter therein. How long was it there? Was it destroyed in the flood? Did it, unattended, decay over time until its location was lost in the generations of man's sinful existence? Yet how could a place unaffected by sin bear the corruption of sin? Will anything holy see corruption (Psalm 16:10)? Should it not have remained in all its perfect beauty as a reminder to fallen man of a better world that might be his through obedience to God's word? If that is the case we must ask whether God would destroy in the Flood that which is perfect and sinless. God forbid! Therefore it is reasonable to conjecture that prior to the Flood, God removed Eden from the earth, taking it to heaven so that one small portion of His original work would remain as a remnant of the original, free from the curse placed upon the earth, like a seed saved from a dying tree to again be planted after the harvest.

2:8

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; <u>These things saith the first and the last</u>, which was dead, and is alive.

Echo: On the first and the last, see 1:17

2:10

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, <u>and I will give thee a crown of life</u>.

Echo: **James 1:12.** *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

Note: There are two Greek words used for 'crown' in the book of Revelation; one is *diadēma* signifying a royal crown, the other is *stephanos* signifying a crown of victory. In both the passage and its echo it is the *stephanos* that is awarded to the faithful one.

James also says it is those who endure temptations that will receive the crown: *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,* he writes, *for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* James includes the key thought that it is those who love the Lord who have been promised this gift. In fact it is only those who love God who will be able to stand during times of persecution; for the issues, especially during the last days, will be such that mere principle alone will be insufficient to enable anyone to resist. Love can motivate us to take actions that otherwise we would not consider taking. Only our love for God and our desire to do His will at all costs will provide the necessary motivation to remain true to God during the events that are revealed later on in the book of Revelation.

2:11
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; <u>He that overcometh</u> shall not be hurt of the second death.

Echo: On he that overcometh, see 2:7

2:12
And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath <u>the sharp sword with two edges;</u>

Echo: On the two-edged sword, see 1:16

2:14

But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

Echo: **Numbers 31:16**. *Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.*

Note: In Num 31:15, 16 we find out something about the sin of Balaam; he advised Israel's enemies that the way to defeat Israel was to weaken their society through idolatry and sexual immorality. This would turn the men from the purity of their faith. It in essence the same sin as that of the Nicolaitans who are also mentioned here as being tolerated in the church. The entire story can be read in Numbers 22-24.

Whereas Ephesus had totally rejected this practice, Pergamos is willing to tolerate it. Thus a compromise has taken place, and the church has allowed immorality and falsehood to enter its ranks unprotested. The easiest way out for Pergamos was to mix a little paganism with its Christianity. But such a mix is impossible with God. Do we compromise our faith and let little things slip by because we are afraid of being seen as a fanatic?

2:15

So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the <u>Nicolaitans,</u> which thing I hate.

Echo*:* On Nicolaitans 2:14

2:16
Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the <u>sword of my mouth.</u>

Echo: On the sword see 1:16

2:17
He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the <u>hidden manna</u>, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a <u>new name</u> written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Echo: Exodus 16:33-35. *And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. [34]As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. [35]And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*

Note: Following the miraculous provision of manna in the wilderness, Moses and Aaron placed - hid - a jar of it in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 16:33; Hebrews 9:4). This was to represent Jesus Christ, the Bread of life who said, *He who eats of me will never go hungry* (John 6:47-51). Thus the gift Christ gives in the hidden manna is Himself. He who fed the multitudes with baskets to spare will feed for all eternity those who come to Him. *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled* (Matthew 5:6).

Echo: Isaiah 62:2 *And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.*

Note: In Bible times a name represented the character of its owner. Both Abram and Jacob were given new names by God; Abram, meaning 'The Father is exalted' , became Abraham, meaning 'The Father of a Multitude'. Jacob, meaning 'Supplanter', became Israel, meaning 'God Contends'. Therefore those who overcome will be given a new name describing their new character in Christ.

2:18

And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Echo: On the flame of fire, and the feet like brass, see 1:14, 15

2:20

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman <u>Jezebel,</u> which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

Echo: **1 Kings 16:30-33.** *[30]And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. [31]And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. [32]And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. [33]And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.*

Note: At first reading, especially from the NIV, it appears that the extent of Thyatira's problem was of a sexual and dietary

nature. However, the reference to Jezebel reveals a deeper problem. Who was Jezebel? She was the non-Israelite wife of King Ahab who, we are told in 1 Kings 21:25, was responsible for leading Israel away from God and into the idolatry of Baal worship. Her story is found in 1Kings 16-21 and 2 Kings 9.

Throughout the book of Revelation, and indeed throughout the Scriptures, gender relationships are used as a metaphor to describe God's dealings with mankind. So many examples of this may be cited that the subject becomes an interesting study on its own. Suffice it to say that in the book of Revelation the church of God is described as a pure woman, as in Chapter 12:1, and the apostate church is a corrupt and adulterous woman, as in Chapter 17:3-6.

Again in Chapter 14:3, 4 we read that the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth were those who did not defile themselves with women, and kept themselves pure. The reference to women is obviously not literal, for if it were we might be led to believe that only virginal men can be saved. Thus the symbolic nature of the passage under study leads us to understand better the adultery referred to as spiritual rather than literal, in which it is understood to be the worship of false gods.

Thus Jezebel represents a climate of apostasy within the church at Thyatira in which the purity of the worship of Christ was being replaced by pagan idolatry.

2:21, 22

And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Echo: **2 Kings 9:34-37.** *Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. [36]Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: [37]And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.*

Note: Even now God gives opportunity for repentance. Jezebel herself, Christ tells us, refuses to repent, but those who commit adultery with her can still be forgiven if they do so. In Chapter 18: 4 a plea is made for people to come out of fallen Babylon. God refers to these as 'my people'. We humans have a tendency to classify people and then to judge them according to that classification. Whist this is true of nationality or skin colour, it is especially true of religion. Yet God, who 'looks not on the outward appearance', seeks out those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. These He finds even in Babylon – even a Babylon that is about to be destroyed.

2:23

<u>And I will kill her children with death;</u> and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Echo: **1 Kings 10:7.** *And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel. [8]And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons.*

Note: Following the death of Jezebel, King Jehu of Judah put to death every living relative of Ahab and all Jezebel's children. As Jezebel had turned her people away from the God of

heaven to become idolaters, so any church that forsakes the word of God and falls into idolatry shall be finally destroyed by a just God.

2:27
<u>And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers</u>: even as I received of my Father.

Echo: **Psalm 2:7-9.** *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.* *[8]Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* *[9]Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

Note: A rod of iron symbolizes a rulership that cannot be broken. As someone would use such an instrument to break up old unwanted clay pots, so Christ will do to the nations when He returns as Judge of the earth.

2:28
And I will give him the <u>morning star.</u>

Echo: **Numbers 24:17.** *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

Note: This echo is a messianic prophecy made by Balaam when Balak enticed him to place a curse upon Israel. Instead of a curse, Balaam, moved by the Spirit of God, prophesied the coming of One from the tribe of Judah who would rule Israel in justice.. This Messiah to come was Jesus the Christ. In Revelation 22:16 Jesus also describes Himself as the

Morning Star: *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

And so he is; but those who use the NIV will find a small problem; for Isaiah 14:12 in the NIV refers to Lucifer as the morning star. In fact the expression "morning star" refers to the star that is sometimes seen in the sky shortly before the dawn hence the name 'son of the dawn' . Those who have studied astronomy will know that the planet Venus is relatively close to the sun, and therefore is often seen to rise just before the sun rises (as well as to set soon after the sun). Therefore people seeing Venus rise know that the dawn will soon break. The name Lucifer also means 'the shining one' or 'son of the dawn'.

In the context of Thyatira, Jesus is reminding the faithful of Thyatira that the dawn is soon coming; that this period of darkness is soon to end. Thus it was during the period of Thyatira that the light of the Gospel was shed abroad by faithful men such as John Wycliffe, Martin Tyndale and of course, Martin Luther. These men God used to break the power of darkness and terror by bringing the Word of God into the languages of the common people so that they could understand for themselves the Gospel of Christ. The reference to the morning star was a sign to the persecuted believers of the Dark Ages that time would be when Christ would come back and install the kingdom He established when the carpenter of Nazareth.

Chapter 3

3:1

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the <u>seven stars</u>; I

know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Echo: On the seven stars, see 1:20

3:3
Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Echo: **Luke 12: 39, 40.** *And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. [40]Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

Echo: **1 Thessalonians 5:2, 5.** *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. [3]For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

Echo: **2 Peter 3:10.** *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*

Echo: **Matthew 25:1-13. …***And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. [11]Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. [12]But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. [13]Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

Note: When Christ says that He will come as a thief, he is not saying that He is coming to steal something. Nor is He saying that He will necessarily come quietly, for we are told in Matthew 24:31 tells us that He will come with the sound of a great trumpet. Peter, in the quote above makes it clear that Christ's coming will be a very noisy affair. Rather, it is the unexpectedness of His coming that takes people by surprise. If we know when a thief is to come, his tiptoeing will avail him nothing.

The Church in Sardis is a church that represents the approach of "the time of the end". In His letter to Thyatira Christ hints at his return to give hope to the suffering faithful. Now Christ warns them that they must remain awake to the signs of the times, so that they will be ready when He comes back. Sadly, as His arrival is imminent, the world has no inkling of the event, and no interest in it . Indeed those who feel the responsibility of giving the warning are treated as fanatics and doomsayers. Yet we see from the number of references to this event in other parts of Scripture that it is a message God wants us to be well aware of. It is not his will that any should perish.

3:4, 5a
Thou hast a few names even in Sardis <u>which have not defiled their garments</u>; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment;

Echo: **Isaiah 64:6.** *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Note: Sardis is given a three-fold promise to overcomers: to be clothed in white robes; an assurance that their names will remain in the Book of Life; and that Christ will confess their names before all of heaven. White robes are mentioned also

in Revelation 4:4; 6:11; 7:9-14 and, we are told, are given to all those who are redeemed from the earth. These robes are not simply a gift given to the redeemed; they are a necessity in order to enter the kingdom. Using marriage imagery, Christ reminds us in His parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22: 1-14), that only those who wear the wedding garment are worthy to attend the wedding. What is this garment? Is it our good deeds? By no means! Is it our obedience to God's Law? Certainly not! It is a free gift to all who are invited, and is for those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb and made white (Revelation 7:14). In Isaiah 1:18 we are told, *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow'.* Thus these robes are given to those who sins have been forgiven. Forgiven sins are washed away and exist no longer, leaving the repentant sinner clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

3:5b

and I will not blot out his name out of <u>the book of life</u>, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Echo: Exodus 32:31-33. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. [32]Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. [33]And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

Note: The Book of Life is first mentioned in Exodus 32:32, 33 where Moses pleads with God on behalf of his idolatrous people asking that if God not forgive them, that his name be blotted out of the book He has written. It is also found in Daniel 12:1, *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

There is a hint found when comparing the Scriptural references to the Book of Life, that we can do nothing to have our name written there, rather it is what we do that causes our name to be removed. In Revelation 17:7, 8 we are told that the book has existed with names in it since the foundation of the world. This raises an interesting question for Christians: are we born saved, and lost only when we have unrepented sin? Or are we born lost, and remain that way until we come to Christ? Arguments can be made either way. But while we do not fully understand the plan of salvation in its entirety, we can have confidence that God is entirely just in His dealings with us; that salvation is a free gift of God, and cannot be earned; that it is our death that is earned by our bad deeds unrepented of. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 6:3).

3:7

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, <u>he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.</u>

Echo: **Isaiah 22:20-22.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: [21]And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand: and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. [22]And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*

Note: Christ identifies Himself to the Philadelphians as 'He who has the key of David'. Strangely, the parallel passage in Revelation 1:18 differs in that Christ is described there as having the keys to hell and to death. Why the discrepancy?

The solution is suggested in an interesting passage in Isaiah 22:20-22 in which Eliakim, the keeper of the house (2 Kings 18:18), is given the key to Jerusalem, the House of David. Eliakim, who also wears the robe and the sash as worn by Christ in Revelation 1:13, is a Christ figure who has the authority to admit or to deny entry into the earthly Jerusalem. Those who were given entry were safe; those refused entry would be killed by the enemy. So we see that the key of David is the key to life or death, and that the two verses are in harmony. Christ informs the Philadelphians that He, the antitypical Eliakim, has given them an open door no one can shut because only He has the key.

3:12

Him that overcometh <u>will I make a pillar in the temple</u> of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him <u>my new name.</u>

Echo: **1 Kings 7:21.** *And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.*

Note: The Temple of Solomon, we are told in 1 Kings 7:13-22, had two large pillars either side of its entrance. One pillar was named *Jachin* meaning, 'He Shall Establish'; the other named *Boaz* meaning 'In It Is Strength'. As the victorious Philadelphians uphold the truth of God they become as pillars with a name on them that describes their own faithfulness.

Echo: Genesis 41:35. *And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.*

Note: Christ also has a new name. The allusion to this is indirect, and is seen only in the typology of the Hebrew Scriptures. For as will be seen more fully in the note on Revelation 5:5, the people, the places, and the objects of the Hebrew Scriptures are found to be types of Christ. Just as the earthly life of Christ was a fulfillment of the history of Israel, so the lives of the men of Israel foretold the Messiah and His mission. A good example of this is Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel: his innocence, his purity of character, his sale for a few pieces of silver, his resistance to overwhelming temptation, his low reputation – an imprisoned slave - all prefigured the sufferings of Christ. Yet Joseph was to be raised out of his pit of insignificance, given a new name, and elevated to become the prime minister of all Egypt whence would come all the world to bow at his feet. Thus would the suffering servant become the great provider for all Israel, and for the entire world.

3:14

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the <u>faithful and true witness</u>, the beginning of the creation of God;

Echo: **Jeremiah 42:5.** *Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. [6]Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.*

Note: When the word 'LORD' is capitalized, as in the verse quoted, it refers to Yahweh, or Jehovah, and is a transliteration of the Hebrew characters YHWH, the name of God. In Jeremiah 42: 5 we see then that it is Jehovah who is the true and faithful witness. Yet in Revelation 3:14 that title is attributed to Christ, thus giving each equal status. In fact many attributes of God

are described in Christ, and many of the attributes of Christ are described in Jehovah. For example, in Revelation 1:4-6 John writes on behalf of the One 'who is and was and is to come'. While verse 4 identifies the Father as the One 'who is, and was, and is to come', verses 8-18 clearly credits this attribute to the Son.

Similarly, in Revelation 1:8-11 the Lord describes Himself as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the Almighty. This sounds as though the Father is speaking, yet Revelation 22:13 identifies the Alpha and Omega as the Son. Hence we see in the book of Revelation that there is a unity between the Father and Son that is perhaps best explained by the words of Christ Himself, *"I and my Father are One"* (John 10:30). How true are the Apostle Paul's words in Colossians 2:9 that *in Him (Christ) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*

Not only in Revelation do we find this oneness between Father and Son. In Psalm 23 the LORD is my Shepherd; in John 10:11 Christ is the Good Shepherd. In Deuteronomy 32:4 God is the Rock; in Matthew 16:18 Christ is the Rock. In Isaiah 43:3 God is the Saviour; in John 4:42 Christ is the Saviour. In Isaiah 48:17 God is our Redeemer, and in Galatians 4:5 Christ is our Redeemer.

The nature of the Godhead is a mystery to man, one that he has never been able to explain. Christianity is seen by other faiths as blasphemous because of its understanding of a Triune God. Yet Jesus Himself was considered blasphemous when He proclaimed before a hostile crowd, *"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was, I am"* (John 8:58). Perhaps one way God has helped us grasp this unfathomable relationship is through His joining of Adam and Eve together in marriage, observing that they were now one flesh. Two separate individuals, yet one in spirit, purpose and flesh.

3:18

I counsel thee to <u>buy of me gold tried in the fire</u>, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Echo: Zechariah 13:9. *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

Echo: 1 Peter 1:7. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

Note: Gold tried in the fire refers to the process of refining it to make it pure. The gold is heated until the dross comes to the surface, and when it is removed the pure gold remains. By allowing trials and difficulties into our lives, Christ refines us, removing our 'dross', so that only the gold remains, fashioned in the likeness of Christ Himself.

Suffering is never pleasant, and many of us tend to feel sorry for ourselves when misfortunes come. We suffer from 'PLOM' (Poor Little Old Me) Syndrome. Yet we do well to develop a different attitude to suffering. God allows into our lives only those trials that will mold our characters, and help us become the people He wants us to be. A diamond only becomes a gem of beauty after it has been cut, not before; the cutter carefully examines the rough stone, searches for its weaknesses and flaws, and then carefully takes his tools to it to produce the sparkling gem. This is just how God deals with us. While it hurts at the time, we can rest assured that the Master Cutter will be more than happy with the finished product.

3:20

<u>Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:</u> if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Echo: **Song of Solomon 5:2-6.** *I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. [3]I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? [4]My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. [5]I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. [6]I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

Note: Throughout the Scriptures marriage is used as an illustration of God's relationship with His people. For example Jeremiah 6:2 says, *I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.* The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-32 also sees the relationship between Christ and His church as a marriage. Indeed Christ refers to His believers as 'virgins' in Matthew 25:1-13, and at many other times uses the marriage analogy to describe His relationship with His followers. His awesome promise of John 14:1-3 that He will return to His Father's house to prepare a room for His bride is based of Middle-eastern marriage custom. Even the Ordinance of the Last Supper is based on the Jewish betrothal ceremony in which the bride, by accepting the cup, pledges herself to her bridegroom.

But nowhere in the Scripture is there an image of such intimacy between Christ and His Church as in Revelation

3:20. Here Christ uses the language of a spurned lover to express His longing for the intimacy that he yearns for with His people. Those who have been rebuffed in love can well sense the desolation that Christ experiences when His knock goes unanswered.

Chapter 4

4:1, 2

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

Echo: Ezekiel 1:26. *And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it*.

Echo: Daniel 10:14. *Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days.*

Note: The Book of Revelation has close links with the Book of Daniel, and indeed it is necessary to have a clear understanding of Daniel's prophecies in order to comprehend those of Revelation. We have already seen echoes to Daniel in Revelation 1:13-15, and we see in this verse, 4:1, that both Daniel and John are shown, by an angel, events that are to take place in the future. However, it is to the Book of Ezekiel that Revelation 4 primarily alludes. The similarities between

John's vision and Ezekiel's are considerable, and as we work our way through Revelation 4 we will note them. In both chapters the respective prophets see a throne in heaven and the presence of God above it. But as we continue we shall note that the visions are not identical.

4:3
And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

Echo: **Ezekiel 1:27, 28.** *And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.*

Note: In Ezekiel chapter 1, we find a description of the throne, but the colours are different. The brilliance appears to be more of an amber colour, while the rainbow is closer to the colour spectrum we normally associate with a rainbow. Ezekiel notes that while the brilliance appears as amber, it is sapphire blue that predominates in the heaven he sees. Rather than seeing this as a contradiction, the variance tells us that God is never constrained or limited by any one convention. Our God is a colourful God.

The three colours mentioned by John are likened to precious stones, and the One on the throne is described as the colour of jasper and carnelian. The stone known in ancient times as jasper was translucent, and today we would probably use a diamond to describe what John saw. The flashing that John sees may be visualised as the flashing that is observed when

a well cut diamond is held to the light, only magnified many times. Mingled with this brilliance, is the red radiance of carnelian, giving the whole a most beautiful and dramatic appearance. Surrounding the throne, John sees a rainbow of rich green as seen in the emerald.

4:4

And round about the throne were <u>four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting</u>, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

Echo: **1 Chronicles 24: 1-4.** *Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [2]But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. [3]And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. [4]And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers.*

Note: The only reference to twenty-four elders (chiefs) in the Hebrew Scriptures is found in 1 Chronicles 24 1-4 where King David divides the sons of Aaron, who acted as the priests of Israel, into twenty-four courses. Each course was to take turns in officiating in the Temple, while all courses were present for the Feast of Tabernacles. Verse 10 of this chapter identifies Abijah as the chief for the eighth course. It was to this course that Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist belonged (Luke 1:5).

4:5

And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven <u>lamps of fire burning before the throne,</u> which are the seven Spirits of God.

Echo: See Revelation 1:4

4:6a

<u>And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal</u>:

Echo: **1 Kings 7:23-26.** *And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.* [24]*And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the* knops *were cast in two rows, when it was cast.* [25]*It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.*

Note: The image presented by the sea of glass is usually pictured as a great expanse of glittering crystal large enough for all the redeemed to stand on. This is a valid picture, but it may also be an allusion to the Hebrew Sanctuary. In 1 Kings 7:23 we read of the temple laver being referred to as a 'Sea'. The laver was used for washing so that the priest was clean when he entered the Holy Place. In Revelation 15:2 we find that all the redeemed are standing beside it (NIV), or on it (KJV). In Revelation 7:14 the redeemed are described as having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Thus there is seen here the concept of an antitypical laver and the role it plays in our purification, for those who stand by the sea of glass have been symbolically washed by the blood of the Lamb.

4:6b-8
and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. [7]And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. [8]And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Echo: **Ezekiel 1:4-10.** *And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. [5]Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man. [6]And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings. [7]And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. [8]And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings. [9]Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward. [10]As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle*.

Note: The KJV calls these creatures beasts, but that is not the best word to describe them. The Greek for beast is *therion;* the word used here is *zōon.* It is better translated as "living being" and not as an animal. Who they are we are not told. Both Ezekiel and John see them in the Temple in the centre of the throne area. Both men describe them in terms of a man, a

lion, an ox and an eagle. Perhaps these symbolize attributes of Christ – wisdom, royalty, strength, omniscience.

Chapter 5

5:1
And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

Echo: **Daniel 12:4.** *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*

Echo: **Daniel 7: 9, 10.** *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.* [10]*A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

Note: While these passages do not make direct reference to the book, or scroll, of Revelation 5:1, the image presented is that at the end of time, when the day of final reckoning comes, the words that have been sealed up will then be opened for all to read. Thus they refer to a time of judgment upon the earth – a time when all that has been hidden will be made known; a time when all the deeds done by men, both good and evil, will be exposed.

There is also a reference to a book written on both sides in Ezekiel 2:9, 10 which says: *And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.* However this book is not sealed.

5:5

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, <u>the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David</u>, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Echo: Genesis 49:8-10. *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. [9]Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? [10]The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

Echo: Isaiah 11:10. *[10]And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

Note: These echoes are just two of many Messianic passages that are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. Beginning at Genesis 3:15 (*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*), right through to Malachi 3:1 (…*and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple*…), the Hebrew Scriptures tell of the birth, life, and death of the promised Messiah. They tell where He would be born (Micah 5:2), when He would be anointed (Daniel 7:24-27), and how he would die (Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Numbers 21:4-9 and many more). The two echoes of

Revelation 5:5 give details of the tribe He would belong to, and His family line.

Jesus said, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me*". Little have we Christians understood the full meaning of those words. For in the people, the places, and the objects of the Hebrew Scriptures are found types of Christ; in Melchizedek the priest-king without beginning or end; in Isaac the miraculous child of promise; in Joseph the rejected, tempted, innocent provider; in Moses the deliverer; in Joshua the conqueror; in David the anointed king; in Boaz the kinsman-redeemer; in Jonah who gave his life for those on the ship and who was raised after three days in the depths; and many more.

Not only in the people, but in objects and events do we find Christ; in Noah's Ark; in the burning bush; in the sacrificial lamb; in Mount Horeb; in the rock struck by Moses; in the temple and its furnishings and services; in the annual festivals from Passover to Tabernacles.

All these lives, objects and events were given to help us understand God's plan to bring sinful man back into harmony with heaven. More than that they were given that we might catch a glimpse of this wonderful Son of God who is our Brother, our Advocate and our Redeemer, the Incomparable Jesus.

5:6

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, <u>stood a Lamb as it had been slain</u>, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Echo: Genesis 22:7,8. *And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he*

said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering:

Echo: Exodus 12:3-11. *In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers…Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year…And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it…And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S Passover.*

Echo: John 1:29. *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Echo: 1Corinthians 5:7. *For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*

Note: As we saw in the previous verse, Christ is the theme of the Holy Bible. In the Hebrew Scriptures He is the Promise; in the Greek, the fulfillment of the Promise. Even when righteous Abel made the offering that resulted in his death, the lamb he offered prefigured Christ. Even before that, God clothed Abel's parents in skins, undoubtedly from an animal sacrificed as a promise of the Redeemer to come. These skins, given by God Himself were a symbol of the Righteousness of Christ. The Scriptures are all about Christ.

5:9

<u>And they sung a new song,</u> saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast

redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Echo: **Psalm 96:1-3.** *O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth. [2]Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth* his *salvation from day to day. [3]Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.*

Note: David instructs all the earth to declare God's glory to the heathen nations in a new song. Our passage in Revelation responds to this instruction by revealing that those who sing the new song come from every people group in the earth.

5:10
And hast made us unto our God <u>kings and priests:</u> and we shall reign on the earth.

Echo: See Revelation 1:6.

5:11
And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was <u>ten thousand times ten thousand</u>, and thousands of thousands;

Echo: **Daniel 7:10.** *A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten* thousand *times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*

Note: The number referred to here occurs elsewhere only in Daniel 7:10. The context of both passages is the same, namely that this vast number surrounds the throne of God. When Daniel witnesses a judgment scene, John observes a scene of praise and worship. Do the angels then come to the throne in such

large numbers on especially significant occasions? Both scenes are highly significant; Daniel observes that day when the saints are finally vindicated, and John observes the inauguration of Christ the Lamb following His ascension to heaven. Both occasions rank among the great events in the history of the conflict between good and evil; when sin is defeated, and when sin is finally eradicated.

Chapter 6

6:2

And I saw, and behold a <u>white horse</u>: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Echo: Zechariah 6:1-3. *And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. [2]In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; [3]And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses.*

Note: Zechariah 1 also refers to horsemen, and at first reading, the allusion appears to be strong. But there are some major differences between Zechariah's visions and John's. For example, the order of appearance is different, and Zechariah's horses pull chariots where John's have riders. In fact the two passages appear to have little in common except that they both mention four horses of similar colour.

6:4

And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Echo: **Zechariah 1:8.** *I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.*

Note: Again, there seems to be little connection between the two passages, and no explanation is given concerning Zechariah's red horse except that its rider is the Angel of the Lord, and the horses among the myrtle trees are explained in verse 10 to be His messengers.

Echo: **Isaiah 27:1.** *In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.*

Note: An indirect idea rather than a specific reference. The language is quite similar to Revelation 12:4 in which we are told that *"… there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, [8]And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. [9]And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*

6:6

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

Echo: **2 Kings 7:16.** *And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.*

Note: While the two passages are similar in thought, they are very different in intent. The Revelation passage, given in the context of a sinister rider in black, on a black horse, suggests famine, but the echo in 2 Kings tells of so much food that it cost virtually nothing.

In fact it is difficult to place a value of the grain in today's terms, for the measures in Old and New Testaments were not the same. In the Old Testament Hebrew economy a measure was considered to be about 7 litres, and a shekel is estimated to have been about 11 grams of silver. Thus they would have paid 11 grams of silver for 7 litres of wheat.

In New Testament times a measure was about 1 litre, and a penny, which was considered to be a day's wages, was about 4 grams of silver. Thus the rider of Revelation is offering 1 litre of wheat for 4 grams of silver, or 7 litres for 28 grams of silver. This suggests, of course, that food is scarce during the days of the black horse, and doubly expensive.

6:10

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, <u>How long, O Lord</u>, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Echo: **Psalm 94:3,4.** *LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? [4]How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and* all *the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

Note: Throughout the Psalms a troubled King David asks the question, 'how long?'. How long must the wicked prosper?

How long will evil continue? More than at any other time in this world's history do we ask the same question; how long will it be before the Lord intervenes and stops the hatred, the genocides and the terrorism, and the immorality?

By His delay God allows the whole world to see the true nature of evil; to see the result of the world's experiment with sin. But in doing so, He sets Himself up to be maligned and misunderstood. For it appears that truly He has either abandoned us, proved Himself ineffectual in controlling us, or, as most today would like to think, He never existed in the first place. They say "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of Creation" (2 Peter 3:4). Like Moses, we want to say to God "Remember your servants O Lord, lest the land you brought us out of say, 'Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them'" (Deuteronomy 9:27,28). Yet God is not forgetful of His promises, as the following verse reminds us:

6:11
<u>And white robes were given unto every one of them</u>; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Echo: **Isaiah 61:10.** *I will greatly rejoice in the* LORD*, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness…*

Note: The robes represent the Righteousness of Christ. See 3:4, 5a above.

6:12-17

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; [13]And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. [14]And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. [15]And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; [16]And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: [17]For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Echo: Joel 2:30-32. *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. [31]The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. [32]And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered…*

Echo: Isa 13:9, 10. *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. [10]For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

Echo: Matthew 24:29-31. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: [30]And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [31]And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and*

they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Note: The events described under the sixth seal involve a great earthquake, the darkening of the sun, the moon becoming as blood, and the stars falling from heaven. These are followed by the heavens unrolling just as a tightly rolled scroll or picture does when it is released, and causes catastrophic movement of the continents and islands.

The context would suggest that these cataclysmic events occur worldwide. To be consistent we should ask if they are literal events, or do they symbolize some kind of spiritual catastrophe? Given the words of Christ in Matthew 24, it seems safe to understand this passage as literal for this is indeed what we might expect to occur with the return of Christ.

It is certain that God could use no event more effectively to gain humankind's attention than those described here. If today an earthquake rocked the entire planet; if today the sun were to stop shining and the moon turn red; if today the stars were to fall from heaven, there would be no question of the meaning that would be placed upon it. Yet these events have taken place in the past, and when they occurred those who experienced them were convinced that the end of the world had come. It is only the final event, the unrolling of the heavens that has not happened yet.

On November 1, 1755, at the dawning of that Biblical period of 'the time of the end', an earthquake, epicentred in Lisbon, Portugal rocked most of the known world, being felt as far away as the West Indies. Twenty-five years later on May 19, 1780 occurred what became known as 'the dark day' when, during mid-morning, night appeared to fall over the north-eastern United States for several hours. That night the full moon, when it appeared, was reddish in colour. Finally, on

November 13, 1833, occurred the greatest meteor shower[4] ever witnessed by man. Again, it occurred over the north-eastern United States, the 'burned over district' in which was a major concentration of Gospel activity.

It cannot be known if these events represent the complete and only fulfilment of this prophecy. However, their timing and order of occurrence was a strong sign to students of the Bible that the earth had entered the time of the end. Today modern science looks with ridicule upon the Scriptures and those who believe them, but the words of Christ on the Mount of Olives, and the words recorded by John the Apostle in Revelation 6, witness that soon it will be to God than men turn, not science.

Chapter 7

7:1
And after these things I saw four angels standing on the <u>four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth</u>, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

Echo: Ezekiel 7:1-3. *Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, [2]Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. [3]Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways…*

[4] Students of astronomy will be aware that each November a meteorite shower occurs within the constellation of Leo. The intensity of this shower varies from year to year. In 1833 it was the greatest ever recorded.

Echo: **Daniel 7:2,3.** *Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. [3]And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.*

Echo: **Matthew 24:31**. *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Note: 'Four winds' are also referred to in Jeremiah 49:36, Ezekiel 37:9, Daniel 7:2; 8:8; 11:4, Zechariah 2:6, Matthew 24:31, and Mark 13:27. In each case they suggest the entirety of the earth, or the four points of the compass. In this case, as in Daniel 7:2, the winds also suggest turmoil and strife, and the reference to the land, the sea, and the trees also strongly suggests the world-wide nature of the terrors to come upon the earth once the angels release the winds.

7:2,3

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having <u>the seal of the living God</u>: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, [3]Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, <u>till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.</u>

Echo: **Ezekiel 9:3-6**: *And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*

Note: The seal is also mentioned in *Revelation 14:1* and *22:4*. Both these identify the seal of the living God as his Name; John *says* that God's servants will have His Name written on their foreheads. In Bible times names were given to represent a

character. Thus Jacob, meaning 'deceiver', had his name changed to Israel meaning 'He will rule'. Abraham's name was changed from 'High Father' to 'Father of a multitude'. Thus God's Name also represents His Character.

The entire Bible is a revelation of God's character, and nowhere do we find it more clearly revealed than in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Yet it is not simply a matter of intellectual assent to the existence of Jesus that will seal the righteous, it is discipleship; and discipleship means servanthood. For this reason Jesus frequently stressed the importance of obedience in expressions such as, *"If you love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). It is therefore not surprising that this passage refers to the sealed ones as servants, those who do the bidding of their Master.

One characteristic of the servants is that they sorrow over the state of the world. Many claim to believe in God, but they experience no sorrow for the rejection of God's Word, and no grief for the abuse heaped upon His name. That the state of the world today is a cause for grief is beyond dispute; but while we readily lament the behaviour of terrorist factions, corrupt governments and paedophiles, we somehow fail to grieve over the moral decadence, the greed, and the lack of political will that so characterises our world today.

See Revelation 22:4 for further reference to God's name written on the forehead.

7:4

And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed <u>an hundred and forty and four thousand</u> of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

Echo: 1 Chronicles 27:1. *Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any*

matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand.

Note: There are no direct references in the Hebrew Scriptures to 144,000. The closest echo is found in 1 Chronicles 27:1-15 where twelve military units, each of 24,000 men, are appointed by King David to take their turn acting as the national guard. Each unit served one month at the Capital, while the other eleven units made up the nation's regular army. Thus the total number of soldiers is 288,000.

7:16, 17

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. [17]For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Echo: Isaiah 49:10. *They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.*

Echo: Isaiah 25:6. *He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.*

Note: The passage in Isaiah 49:10 is the closest we have seen to a direct quotation, and is so far the most comprehensive allusion we have seen; far more than an echo. The passage in Isaiah 25:6 is also quoted in 1 Corinthians 15:54.

Chapter 8

8:1
And when he had opened the seventh seal <u>there was silence in heaven</u> about the space of half an hour.

Echo: **Joshua 6:10.** *And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.*

Note: The importance of this echo is not seen from this verse in isolation, but will be seen in the verses following.

8:2
And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given <u>seven trumpets</u>.

Echo: **Joshua 6:4-5.** *And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets. [5]And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.*

Note: The seven trumpets of Revelation are blown one at a time; the seven trumpets of Joshua are all blown together, but for

seven days. For seven days, the Israelites, led by Joshua (the Hebrew form of Jesus), marched in silence around the city of Jericho. Leading the column were seven priests, each sounding a trumpet. Following them was the Ark of the Covenant borne by the Levites. On the seventh day, after seven circuits were completed, the trumpets sounded, the people let out a great shout, and the walls collapsed. Joshua was leading his people into the Promised Land.

The previous verse tells us that the silence in heaven lasted half an hour. In the time prophecies of the apocalyptic writings a year is always represented by a day. Hence 1260 days becomes 1260 years of real time, In this case, half an hour represents one week of literal time. Thus again we see that the half-hour of heavenly silence is equal in time to the week of Joshua's silence. In Revelation 8, Jesus leads His people out of the wilderness of sin as the walls of Satan's kingdom come tumbling down, and we are led into the promised land where we shall dwell with Christ forever.

8:3-4

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a <u>golden censer</u>; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. [4]And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

Echo: **Exodus 30:1-7.** *And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon…And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. [7]And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.*

Note: The scene described here, though strange to the non-Jew, was a familiar one to John, for it is a description of the *Tamid,*

the daily temple sacrifice in which the priest would take the censer of incense. Twice each day the priest would sacrifice an animal for the sins of the people – the morning sacrifice as though covering sins committed during the night, and the evening sacrifice as though covering sins committed during the day. In this way the sins of the people were always atoned for. The lamb offered was a type of Christ who was slain 'once and for all' so that there may never be a time when atonement is not available for us.

8:5

And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Echo: **Ezekiel 10: 2** *And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city. And he went in my sight.*

Note: There was a silence in heaven as seven angels stood by the Temple with trumpets and awaited the signal to sound them. While they stood there another angel took a censer full of fire and cast it to the earth. The fact that it is cast to the ground suggests that its purpose as a means of intercession is past, for now the High Priest ceases His intercessory role, and judgment commences. The fact that it is full of fire may also suggest that there is no incense in it, also signifying an end to intercession.

8:7

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Echo: **Exodus 9:22-25.** *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. [23]And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. [24]So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. [25]And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.*

Note: The language of the first trumpet, with its hail, fire and blood, is strongly reminiscent of the seventh plague upon Egypt. These plagues were judgments upon a people who rejected God, and were under condemnation for their arrogance. "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" was their demand (Exodus 5:2). Therefore, it is logical to associate the seven trumpets with judgment on God's enemies. Trumpets were also blown in Israel during the week leading up to the annual Day of Judgment, *Yom Kippur*, during which time the people were to search their hearts and repent of their sins. These sins were then symbolically placed upon the head of the scapegoat leaving Israel in a state of righteousness before God. The reference to thirds of the earth suggests a progression in destruction. We saw in 6:8 a reference to fourths of the earth, now the damage is in thirds, and finally, in the seven last plagues of chapter 16, which are very similar in order and in nature to the trumpets, the entire earth is damaged. However, it is only during the time of the last plagues that the earth comes to its final end. Therefore the trumpets do not describe final events, they are only partial judgments, not total; they follow the course of earth's history

as did the churches and seals, albeit from the perspective of the wicked.

8:8,9

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of <u>the sea became blood</u>; [9]And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

Echo: Exodus 7: 20,21. *And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the* waters *that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. [21]And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Note: The second trumpet is somewhat reminiscent of the first plague upon Egypt.

8:10

And the third angel sounded, and <u>there fell a great star from heaven</u>, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

Echo: Isaiah 14:12. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! [13]For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: [14]I will ascend above*

the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. [15]Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Echo: **Luke 10:18.** *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

Note: Lucifer was originally a glorious angelic being, loved and respected by the inhabitants of heaven. In some mysterious way, pride spawned the seeds of sin in his heart and led to his rebellion against the government of God. They say that pride goes before a fall; the more Lucifer seeks to elevate himself, the further he falls, until he is found in the bottomless pit of Revelation 20, his last habitation prior to his final destruction.

8:11

And the name of the star is called <u>Wormwood</u>: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

Echo: **Deuteronomy 29:18.** *Lest there be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth this day away from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood.*

Note: Wormwood is a bitter herb with the Latin name, *Artemesia absinthium.* It is used in small quantities to provide flavour, and is found in the wine known as *vermouth,* a name derived from the German *'vermut*'. The word is used several times in the Hebrew Scriptures to denote bitterness.

8:12

And the fourth angel sounded, and <u>the third part</u> of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the

stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Echo: **Ezekiel 5:11, 12.** *Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them.*

Echo: **Joel 2:30,31.** *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.*

Note: The fourth trumpet particularly echoes the words of Joel 2:28-32 and the words of Christ in Matthew 24 where he quotes Joel. Both these passages reveal that in the last days there will be natural signs in the heavens with the sun darkening and the moon turning to blood.

Chapter 9

9:1
And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a <u>star fall from heaven</u> unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the <u>bottomless pit.</u>

Echo: **Genesis 1:1,2.** *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and*

darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Echo: **Psalm 71:20.** *Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.*

Note: For the fallen star, see 8:10.

Note: The Greek word for bottomless pit in the Bible is *Abussos*, meaning Abyss. It is the same word as is used in the Greek Old Testament (The Septuagint) to describe the earth in Genesis 1:2. Thus it says, in effect, 'darkness was upon the face of the bottomless pit'. In Psalm 71:20 the word is also used to refer to the depths of the earth.

The earth is referred to as a bottomless pit prior to the creation, and after the second advent of Christ prior to its being re-created in Revelation 21. Thus the events that come upon the earth in its final days appear to be almost as though God is undoing the work He did in creating the earth. In fact the order of the damage done to the earth during the trumpets and the plagues is virtually the reverse of the order of its creation.

9:2

And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as <u>the smoke of a great furnace</u>; and <u>the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.</u>

Echo: **Genesis 19:27,28**. *And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.*

Echo: **Joel 2:30,21.** *And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. [31]The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.*

Note: The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a type of the final destruction of the earth. Jesus said, *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot...·Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed* (Luke 17:28-31). It is noteworthy that the Sodomites saw homosexual practice as their right to demand at will; just as today.

9:3,4

And there came out of the smoke <u>locusts</u> upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

Echo: **Exodus 10:12-14.** *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left. [13]And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. [14]And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. [15]For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.*

Echo: **Joel 2:3.** *A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them*

Note: Both Old Testament passages refer to judgment; in Egypt's case against non-Jews, and in Joel's case against those Jews who have turned their back on God. Therefore, given that the trumpets describe judgments, it is consistent to understand the locust plague as a judgment of God against those who do not obey Him.

9:5

And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that <u>they should be tormented five months</u>: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

Echo: **Genesis 7:24.** *And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days*

Note: Finally they are given a lifespan of five months – approximately the normal lifespan of a desert locust. There is another period of five months in Scripture. The number of days the waters of Noah's flood covered the earth was 150. In prophetic literature a month always has 30 days, therefore 5 months is the same as 150 days. Interestingly, that was also a judgment scene. Perhaps the locusts are to be seen as a sort of flood over the earth executing judgment upon those who have rejected God.

9:7

And the shapes of the locusts <u>were like unto horses</u> prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

Echo: Joel 2:4-7. *The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses; and as horsemen, so shall they run.* [5]*Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.* [6]*Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.* [7]*They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:*

Note: Many Bible students from the time of the Reformation onwards, including John Wesley[5] and Sir Isaac Newton[6], have seen in the imagery of Revelation 9 the Moslem expansion culminating in the rise of the Ottoman Empire. It is worthy of note that the Moslem expansion, when viewed on a map, very closely approximates the areas of common locust invasion. With their flowing turbans, raised swords, and smoking firearms, one can't help wondering if this is what John saw in vision. Could this invasion of Christian lands have been a punishment from God for the apostasy that had taken place in the Christianised world during this time?

9:9

And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

Echo: See 9:7

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5 See Internet article *John Wesley's Notes Upon the New Testament.*

6 Sir Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London: 1773), p.304,305.

9:10
And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to <u>hurt men five months</u>.

Echo: See 9:5

9:13
And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the <u>four horns of the golden altar</u> which is before God,

Echo: **Exodus 27:2.** *And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.*

Note: One can almost picture God looking at the altar in heaven as He tells Moses how to make its counterpart in the wilderness. For according to Hebrews 8:1-5, the earthly sanctuary was made according to the pattern of the true tabernacle in heaven.

Chapter 10

10:4
And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, <u>Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.</u>

Echo: **Daniel 12:4.** *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*

Note: The two instances in Scripture that God tells His servant to seal up what he is told. The passages differ in that Daniel is told to write it down for later revelation, while John is told not even to write it down.

10:5

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

Echo: **Genesis 14:22, 23.** *And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, [23]That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:*

Note: The lifting of the hand was a Biblical method of swearing an oath. Another example is Deuteronomy 32:40. This reminds us of the Jewish culture which pervades the book of Revelation reminding us that an accurate interpretation of Revelation is only possible when placing its message within the context of the Hebrew Scriptures. See also the following verse.

10:6

And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

Echo: **Daniel 12:7.** *And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.*

Note: There were about 600 years between Daniel and John, yet the way of describing God remains the same.

Echo: **Exodus 20:11.** *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Note: Revelation 10:6 is not the only echo of the Fourth Commandment. We will see it again even more strongly in Revelation 14:6. But something else is going on here; as we have seen, Revelation 10:6 also echoes Daniel 10:4-9 and Daniel 12:5-7. These verses tell of the Lord standing on the River Hiddekel which is the name given to one of the four rivers in the Garden of Eden. Eden of course was given to man at the Creation, and will be returned to him when Christ returns. Thus there is an interesting connection between these verses, for they take us back to the beginning of the world, but also remind us 'that there should be time no longer'. Thus Daniel's passage links Creation with the beginning, and the Revelation passage links it with the end. In this way Christ seems to be promising His faithful ones to hang onto their faith because Paradise is soon to be restored.

10:8

And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, <u>Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel</u> which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

Echo: Ezekiel 2:9, 10. *And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; 10And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.*

Note: This book could also refer to the scroll of Revelation 5:1 for it is also written on both sides. However, that was a sealed book, while this one is open to be read.

10:9, 10

And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

Echo: Ezekiel 3:1-3. *Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. 3And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.*

Note: See below on verse 11.

10:11

And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Echo: Ezekiel 3:4-9*And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them.*

5For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; 6Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. 7But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.

Note: While Ezekiel is a prophet for Israel, John is told to prophesy to the whole world. Just as Ezekiel's message was a hard one for the people to swallow causing them to reject it, so the message of Revelation is mighty unpopular and has led men to set it aside as fantasy, or to claim that it is written for a different age. Sadly, as Israel refused to hear Ezekiel, so will the majority reject John's message.

Chapter 11

11:1
And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

Echo: **Ezekiel 40:3-6.***And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate... and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed. 6Then came he unto the gate which looketh*

toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.

Echo: **Zechariah 2:1-2.** *I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.* *2Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.*

Note: There is some difference between these passages; Ezekiel measures the temple, as does John, but Zechariah measures Jerusalem. These are restoration promises to God's people. When someone is observed walking around a property with a tape measure, it conveys the idea that some new construction is to take place. Therefore, Revelation's measuring is a sign to John that his renewed preaching will bear fruit for the kingdom. John is told specifically not to measure the Outer Court, the Court of the Gentiles, for they are not involved in these scenes.

11:2

But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

Echo: **Daniel 7:25.** *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

Note: The expression, *time and times and the dividing of time,* simply means 'a year, two years, and half a year'; in other words 3½ years. In prophetic writings a month is always 30 days, and a year is always 360 days. Therefore 3½ *years* is 3½ x 12 months (42 months). This is the same time period as

the 1260 days mentioned in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6; in that case 3½ x 360 days (1260 days). In Revelation, Gentiles refer symbolically to those who are not God's people. Thus in both the books of Daniel and Revelation, the time period of 1260 days, or 42 months, is the time allocated to the enemies of God to do their work against God's people. While this book is not a commentary, and does not seek to interpret the passage, it will assist the reader to understand that in prophetic time a day is always a year, and that the 1260 days are in fact 1260 years.[7]

11:3

And I will give power unto my <u>two witnesses</u>, and they shall prophesy <u>a thousand two hundred and threescore days</u>, clothed in sackcloth.

Note: *For 1260 days see previous verse. For two witnesses see following verse.*

11:4

These are <u>the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks</u> standing before the God of the earth.

Echo: Zechariah 4:11-14. *Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? 12And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves? 13And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 14Then said*

[7] This is explained in my book <u>A Revelation of the Revelation</u>, www.ncbrightman.com

he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

Note: The two olive trees and the two candlesticks are an allusion to Zechariah 4 in which the prophet sees in vision a seven-branched candlestick, or *menorah*, flanked by two olive trees. Above the *menorah* is a bowl that collects oil from the two trees and channels it to the seven lamps. In the way oil is the fuel for the lamps, so, Zechariah is told, God's work is accomplished through the Holy Spirit. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts* (v. 6). The seven lamps represent the omniscience of God, and the two trees, we are told, are God's two anointed ones that stand by Him to serve Him continually.

11:5

And if any man will hurt them, <u>fire proceedeth out of their mouth,</u> and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Echo: **Psalm 18:6-8.** *In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 7Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. 8There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.*

Note: These words are also found in 2 Samuel 2:9. David is describing God in these passages which is consistent with the understanding, held by many, that the two Witnesses are the Word of God, the Old and the New Testaments. Job also describes a crocodile (or some other extinct reptile) as having sparks coming from its mouth (Job 41:19).

11:6

These have power to shut heaven, <u>that it rain not in the days of their prophecy</u>: <u>and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues,</u> as often as they will.

Echo: **1 Kings 17:1.** *And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*

Echo: **Exodus 7;20, 21.***And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.* *21* *And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.*

Note: It was Elijah that prophesied drought for a period of 3 ½ years (1260 days. See also Luke 4:25 and James 5:17). It was Moses that turned the waters to blood, and brought the plagues upon Egypt. Yet there is also a sense in which Moses and Elijah represent the Old and New Testaments; Moses was the giver of Law, and Elijah, especially as represented by John the Baptist, was the giver of Grace in that he was the forerunner of Christ, the source of all Grace.

11:7

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit <u>shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.</u>

Echo: **Daniel 7:19-21.** *Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;* [20]*And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.* [21]*I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;*

Note: Just as the little horn of Daniel's beast comes up from the water to make war against the saints and overcome them, so the beast of Revelation comes up from the pit and overcomes the two witnesses. Revelation 17:3-8 describes the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit, and reveals the similarity of that beast with this one, for the both have ten horns and seek to destroy the people of God.

11:12

And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. <u>And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud</u>; and their enemies beheld them.

Echo: **Acts 1:9.** *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

Note: The major difference being that Christ was observed to ascend by His friends, not His enemies.

11:15

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, T<u>he kingdoms of this world are become the</u>

kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

Echo: **Psalm 2:1, 2.** *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.*

Echo: **Daniel 2:44.** *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

Echo: **Luke 1:31-33**. *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Note: The word *Christ* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Messiah* which means 'Anointed One'. Those who listen to Handel's *Messiah* will note that the composer uses both Revelation 11:15 and Psalm 2:1, 2 in his oratorio.

11:18

And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Echo: **Psalm 2:1, 2.** *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2The kings of the earth set*

themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed.

Note: See 11:15 above.

11:19
<u>And the temple of God was opened in heaven,</u> and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Echo: Matthew 27:50, 51. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* 51*And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;*

Note: When Jesus breathed His last, the temple curtain ripped open revealing to the world for the first time the Most Holy Place. While the echo is strong, the context is not the same. Matthew's passage opens the way for Christ our Intercessor to break down the 'wall of partition' (Ephesians 2:14) so that through Him we can come directly into the presence of God. The Revelation passage talks of a judgment scene as Christ's work as Mediator concludes, and His work as Judge begins. In other words, the Matthew passage occurs at the Passover while the Revelation passage occurs on the Day of Judgment.

Chapter 12

12:3

And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, <u>having seven heads and ten horns,</u> and seven crowns upon his heads.

Echo: **Daniel 7:7.** *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.*

Note: Daniel describes four creatures in his vision, a lion, a bear, a leopard, and the non-descript beast. The Scriptures reveal that the creatures represent four world empires Babylon, Medo-persia, Greece and Rome. The total number of the heads of these creatures is seven because the leopard (Greece) has four . Thus Daniel also sees seven heads and ten horns (but no crowns).

12:4

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, <u>for to devour her child as soon as it was born.</u>

Echo: **Daniel 8:23-25.** *And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up... he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.*

Note: From the context of Daniel 8, we know that this passage refers to a great power that arises after the decline of the Greek Empire. This, of course, is Rome, and it was the Romans who condemned and crucified Christ.

12:5

And she brought forth a man child, <u>who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:</u> and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Echo: **Psalm 2:7-9.** *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.* *8Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.* *9Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

Note: Christ will one day rule all the nations. In fact the rod was a symbol of justice rather than a weapon of destruction. It is the rod that the shepherd uses to protect his sheep. However, the same rod may be used against the wolf with considerable effect.

12:6

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there <u>a thousand two hundred and threescore days</u>.

Note: See 11:2 and 11:3.

12:7

And there was war in heaven: <u>Michael</u> and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Echo: **Daniel 12:1.** *And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

Echo: **Jude 9.** *Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.*

Note: Michael is evidently none other than He who is the Son of God, the Messiah. While He is also referred to the Archangel, the title also given to Gabriel, God Himself is often referred to as the Angel of the Lord (See Genesis 16, Genesis 22, and Exodus 3:2 for just a few instances).

12:9

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Echo: **Luke 10:17, 18.** *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.* [18] *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

Note: In Revelation 12:4 we saw that the dragon's tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, which were cast down to the earth. Thus the earth is now the dwelling place for Satan and his evil angels, otherwise known as demons. No wonder the earth is the way it is.

Note how Satan is ever falling from one depth to another. In the book of Job he had access to heaven as a son of God. Now he is confined to the earth, and in Revelation 20 he will be cast into a bottomless pit. This is the end result for one who said of himself: *"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High"* (Isaiah 14:13, 14). How truly pride goes before a fall.

12:10

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: <u>for the accuser of our brethren is cast down</u>, which accused them before our God day and night.

Echo: Zechariah 3:1. *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"* [8]

Note: While Christ is described by John as our Advocate who pleads on our behalf (1 John2:1), the court scene is further enhanced by the imagery of Satan as the malicious prosecutor. Of course when the Defense Attorney is also the judge, those who have taken on Christ as their Defense Attorney have nothing to fear.

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[8] *The New International Version*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House) 1984.

12:14

And to the woman were given <u>two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,</u> into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Echo: Deuteronomy 32:9-11. *For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. 10He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:*

Note: For the time, and times, and half a time see 11:2, 3. With the symbols of the Scriptures a woman always represents the people of God, and a wilderness a place of protection where their enemies are not to be found. As with Jacob, so with the Church, God protects, instructs, and keeps them as the apple of His eye.

12:17

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, <u>and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,</u> which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Echo: Daniel 7:20, 21. *And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. 21I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.*

Note: In both *Daniel* and *Revelation*, the enemy, Satan, persecutes God's people. In *Daniel* the righteous are referred to as saints. In *Revelation* they are referred to as those who keep the

commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus. Thus we might deduce from this that a saint can be defined as one who keeps the commandments of God, and has the faith of Jesus. For the concept of the remnant, see 14:1.

Chapter 13

13:1, 2

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Echo: Daniel 7:1-8. *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.* *2Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.* *3And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.* *4The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.* *5And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.* *6After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had*

upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7*After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.* 8*I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.*

Note: See also the note on Revelation 12:3. John sees one beast with seven heads and ten horns while Daniel sees four beasts, also coming out of the water, that between them have seven heads and ten horns. The water is also alluded to in Revelation 17:15 which tells us that water represents peoples; therefore we may assume these beasts arise from among the populace. One difference of note is that John's beast has crowns on its horns, whereas the dragon of Chapter 12 has them on its heads. A further difference between these passages is that John describes them in the reverse order of Daniels account? John lives in the time of Daniel's fourth beast, the Roman Empire, and so he seems to be looking backwards, and does not directly describe the fourth beast.

13:3

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

Echo: Genesis 3:14, 15. *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:* 15*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and*

between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Note: When sin entered the world God made a promise that one day the serpent's head would be crushed. Although probably not understood by man at the time, there would be an infinite cost to pay in keeping that promise. That price was paid at Calvary where our Lord Jesus received the wounds whose scars will be with Him throughout eternity. Revelation 13:3 refers to a time when the beast would appear to have been dealt a deadly blow, but its re-emergence as a world religious power causes the whole world to worship it. However, the promise of Genesis 3:14 and 15 has already been fulfilled in Calvary; now the beast is on borrowed time and soon will receive a wound from which it will never recover.

13:5-7

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

Echo: Daniel 7:25. *And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.*

Note: These two passages in Daniel and Revelation are remarkably similar. They both refer to a beast that attempts to stand in the place of God, and they are both given the same length of time, 1260 days, to execute their satanic authority against God's children. The length of time is discussed under 11:2.

13:8

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in <u>the book of life</u> of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Echo: Exodus 32:31-33. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

Note: For further discussion on the Book of Life see on 3:5.

13:9

If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Echo: Matthew 11:15. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Note: Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus used this expression. It seems to be His trademark, for it is not found in this form anywhere else in the Scriptures except in the Book of Revelation where, of course, Jesus is the one giving the message.

13:10

<u>He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity:</u> he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Echo: **Psalm 68:18.** *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.*

Note: The expression in Psalm 68 refers to a multitude of captives being taken into captivity, as was the practice of victorious generals to parade their captives for all to see. The apostle Paul makes mention of this is Ephesians where he says of Christ, *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men* (Ephesians 4:8). *The imagery is of Christ leading the saints into heaven.*

13:13, 14

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Echo: **2 Kings 1:10.** *And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.*

Echo: **2 Chronicles 7:1.** *Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

Echo: **1 Kings 18:38, 39.** *Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.* *39And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.*

Note: Every time fire came from heaven it was as a direct intervention of God. Thus the deception will be ever the stronger when an agent of Satan is able to replicate the event. Jesus reminds us in Matthew 24:24 that even His faithful followers will be deceived in the last days, and here is a good example of how it will happen: So many Christians today rely on miracles as a basis for their faith, but they will be deceived because they cannot recognise the source of the miracle. The only way to know when a miracle is false or genuine is by reading and studying the Holy Scriptures. Isaiah wrote *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* (Isaiah 8:20).

The law and the testimony refer to God's Word. When this beast power counterfeits the great miracle done through Elijah on Mt. Carmel, people will see this as evidence that this earthly power must truly be of God because it demonstrates the spirit and the power of Elijah. But it is not the miracle that demonstrates his spirit and power; it is the message. It was John the Baptist who first fulfilled the promise of Malachi 4 that Elijah would come again, but it was John's message that carried the power, for he did no miracles. Similarly, in the latter days, it will be the message that must carry the authority, for those that prepare the world for the return of the King will do no miracles.

13:15

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Echo: **Daniel 3:1-18.** *...Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye*

shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?...

Note: Only in the books of Daniel and Revelation do we find a situation in which people are forced upon pain of death to fall down a worship an image. In Daniel's case the vast majority worshipped while only three men are recorded to have refused. In the same way only a relatively small number will refuse to worship the image of Revelation 13:15.

13:16

And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, <u>to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:</u>

Echo: **Genesis 4:15.** *And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.*

Echo: **Ezekiel 9:3-6.** *And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; 4And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.5And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: 6Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary.*

Note: When God gives a mark, it is a sign of protection; when the enemy gives a mark, it is a sign of condemnation. While we are not told where or how Cain was marked, we can see that God marks his faithful on their foreheads, but the enemy's

followers are marked on the hand and the forehead. Surely the hand and the forehead symbolize our actions and our beliefs. While we may be lost by what we do as well as what we believe, we are saved only through what we believe, and not by our actions, for our works can never save us.

13:18
Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is <u>Six hundred threescore and six.</u>

Echo: **1 Kings 10:14.** *Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold.*

Note: This is not really an echo in its truest sense as one does not seem to be a response to the other. Nevertheless it is of interest to note that Solomon was at the height of his greatness at this time, and the passage boasts of it. Yet it was from this time onwards that Solomon began to lose his sight of God, and lose his way.

Chapter 14

14:1
And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the <u>mount Sion,</u> and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

Echo: **Joel 2:32.** *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.*

Note: Throughout Scripture is the idea of a remnant, those who remain faithful to God when all others have forsaken Him (see 12:17). In this case the 144,000 are those who make up this remnant, and as with a bolt of cloth, are identical in every way to the original. The 144,000 have the same characteristics as all those who have called upon the name of the Lord since the days of Noah. The 144,000 were also briefly discussed under Revelation 7:4.

14:3

And they sung as it were a <u>new song</u> before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Echo: *Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.*

Note: See also Revelation 5:9. The concept of a new song is common in the Psalms, and suggests a new experience in the believer's relationship with God. In this case only the redeemed can sing this song because it is a song of redemption; even the angels cannot sing it. As the hymn says:

> But when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their wings;
> For angels never felt the joys that our salvation brings.[9]

[9] Johnson Oatman Jr. SDA Hymnal 425.

14:4

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being <u>the firstfruits</u> unto God and to the Lamb.

Echo: Leviticus 23:10, 11. *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: 11And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.*

Note: The day that Jesus died was the Passover. The third day after the Passover was the Festival of the Firstfruits when the priest would take the first ripening grains in the field and present them to God on behalf of the people. Just as the death of Christ on Calvary was a fulfilment of the Passover, so was His resurrection a fulfilment of the Festival of the Firstfruits. Thus the risen Christ could not allow Mary at the tomb to hinder Him until He knew that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. No wonder the 144,000 sing a new song, for they are the firstfruits of the harvest. Some of them are among those whose tombs were opened on the day of Calvary; perhaps others, like Enoch, Moses and Elijah, had been in heaven a while already. What would have happened to them had Jesus not drunk this bitter cup to its dregs?

14:5

And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Echo: Isaiah 53:9. *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

Note: Those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes will take upon themselves the character and nature of the Lamb. Not just in heaven, but also on earth here and now, the genuine follower of Christ will be known by his integrity.

14:7

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Echo: Exodus 20:11. *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Note: It is quite significant that Creation should be alluded to when the earth's final message goes out, for by this time the world has rejected Creation as an explanation of man's origins. Perhaps this is God's reminder not only of His Creatorship, but also that He rested the seventh day as a memorial to that Creation.

14:8

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Echo: Isaiah 21:9. *And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

Echo: **Jeremiah 51:7, 8.** *Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.* 8*Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed.*

Note: Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied of the destruction of a city which was originally built by Nimrod as a monument of opposition to God. When John lived Babylon the city was already destroyed, thus he refers not to the literal city, but to a religious power that also stands in opposition to God.

14:9

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

Note: For the mark, See 13:16.

14:10

The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

Echo: **Psalm 75:8.** *For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.*

Note: In verse 8 the power that opposes God makes the nations drink the wine of its corruption. In reply God makes that power drink the wine of His anger undiluted with anything that might mitigate His indignation at the evil of the unholy city.

14:11

<u>And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever:</u> and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Echo: Isaiah 34:9, 10. *And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. 10It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

Note: The echo does not refer specifically to ancient Babylon, but to all nations who opposed God, particularly Edom.

14:14

<u>And I looked, and behold a white cloud,</u> and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

Echo: 1 Kings 18:43, 44. *...And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. 44And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.*

Note: The connection between these two passages is Elijah. It was through Elijah that God sent fire from heaven, and Elijah whose prophetic role was to bring about reformation in Israel. Malachi has reminded us that Elijah will come again before the great and terrible day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5,6), and thus the three angels of Revelation 14 present a message of similar content to that which Elijah preached in Israel of old. In both cases a cloud is seen bringing God's deliverance.

14:15, 16

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, <u>Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.</u> [16]And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

Echo: **Joel 3:13, 14.** *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. [14]Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.*

Note: In the crisis of the final days many will also have to make a difficult decision; will they obey the Word of God in spite of ridicule and persecution? Or will they take the easy path, and follow the crowd? This will be an agonizing decision for those who know the Scriptures, but who find the cost of following them too high. The final crisis will be of a worldwide nature, for in these globalist days what affects one affects all.

14:18

And another angel came out from the altar, <u>which had power over fire;</u> and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, <u>and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth;</u> for her grapes are fully ripe. [19]And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Echo: **Matthew 13:36-42.** *Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.*

37He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Note: Strictly speaking this is not an echo for in both cases Christ is the speaker. While in Revelation He uses the grape imagery to describe the unsaved, in the parable He described them as weeds. Yet in both cases it is the angels who do the reaping, and in both cases what is unwanted is cast into the fire.

14:19, 20

And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, <u>and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.</u> And the winepress was trodden <u>without the city</u>, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Echo: **Isaiah 63:3, 4.** *I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

Note: In Palestine, when making wine, the winemakers would tread the grapes in the winepress in order to extract the juice. As they did so their garments would become stained, especially

around the hem. Thus when Christ descends from heaven with His holy cavalry, the horses will tread the winepress of God's anger, and as they do so the blood will stain them to the height of their bridles.

Echo: **Hebrews 13:11-13.** *The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.*

Note: There is symbolism in the winepress being trodden outside the city. On the Day of Atonement the scapegoat, representing sin, is taken out of the city far enough away that it can never come back. Similarly Jesus, when He took upon Himself the sin of the world, became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and was taken outside the city to be crucified. Thus Jesus, in redeeming us, did not simply pay the price for our sins, but He dealt with the whole issue of sin, removing it permanently from the face of the earth. As the earthly sanctuary was a type of the heavenly, so there will be an antitypical Day of Judgement in with sin is finally and completely removed from the world.

Chapter 15

15:2
And I saw as it were <u>a sea of glass</u> mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image,

and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Note: For sea of glass, see on 4:6a

15:3
And they sing the <u>song of Moses</u> the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, <u>Great and marvelous are thy works,</u> Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

Echo: **Exodus 15:1.** *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

Psalm 139:14. *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

Note: For hundreds of years the Children of Israel had suffered at the hands of the Egyptians. This song reflects their joy at finally being free. Similarly the redeemed will finally be free of the trials, torment and persecution from the beast's followers. This sense of relief is reflected in their song.

15:4
Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: <u>for all nations shall come and worship before thee</u>; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Echo: **Psalm 86:8, 9.** *Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All*

nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

Note: In Revelation 14:7, the world was called to fear God and give glory to Him. Those who do, no doubt cannot understand why anyone would not want to do so. On the other side, the enemies of God ask, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him (Rev 13:4)?" They too wonder how anyone would not want to worship the beast. In the issues of the final conflict, all will be fully persuaded in the rightness of their cause. The issue is not sincerity, it is to whom we give our allegiance.

15:6

And the seven angels came out of the temple, <u>having the seven plagues</u>, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

Echo: **Leviticus 26:21-24.** *And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.* 22 *I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.* 23 *And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;* 24 *Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.*

Note: A somewhat distant echo. While God punished His faithless people seven times, now the faithless world must receive the same.

Chapter 16

16:2

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a <u>noisome and grievous sore</u> upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

Echo: **Exodus 9:10, 11.** *And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast.* *11*_And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians_

Note: Just as the boils fell upon the Egyptians prior to the departure of God's people from their captivity, so the sore (the equivalent Hebrew word) will fall upon the godless of the world prior to the departure of the redeemed to their promised land.

16:3, 4

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; <u>and it became as the blood of a dead man:</u> and every living soul died in the sea. *4*_**<u>And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.</u>**_

Echo: **Exodus 7:20, 21.** *And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood.* *21*_And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt._

Note: The second and third plagues also echo those of ancient Egypt. The difference is only that the latter-day plagues affect the entire planet. The parallels between Moses' Egypt and the worldwide environmental situation prior to the deliverance of God's people are very striking. Egypt, the nation that said, "*Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice...? I know not the LORD..."* (Exodus 5:2), is certainly a type of the world of the last days which promotes atheism and ridicules those who believe in God the Creator.

16:5, 6

And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. [6]For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, <u>and thou hast given them blood to drink;</u> for they are worthy.

Echo: **John 6:53-56.** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. [54]Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. [55]For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. [56]He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

Note: Jesus said that to drink His blood brings eternal life. The Bible is full of contrasts, and here we see that everyone who does not drink Christ's blood will have to drink the blood of the plague. In both cases the blood is symbolic, but we all must drink this blood, for only by shed blood can sin be atoned for. The wicked will perish in their sins, but for them it will be their own blood that is shed, for they have no Intercessor.

16:12

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon <u>the great river Euphrates</u>; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

Echo: Genesis 15:18. *In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:*

Note: The Euphrates marked the northernmost border of the land that God originally promised to Abraham. Beyond it were those who opposed them throughout history. In that Babylon is situated on the Euphrates, and Babylon is the spiritual capital of all that is opposed to God, the drying up of this river implies God's punishment upon those who lead out in the persecution of God's people in the last days. The kings of the east would, no doubt, represent those leaders from the region of Babylon.

16:13, 14

<u>And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs</u> come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. [14]For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Echo: Exodus 8:3, 4. *And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs: [4]And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.*

Note: Just as the frogs of the Egyptian plague found their way into every corner of the house, so these evil spirits invade every part of the globe in preparation for the battle of Armageddon.

16:15

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Echo: **Exodus 32:25.** *And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)*

Note: A distant echo is found here in the unexpected arrival of Moses into the camp of Israel, for the people had given him up for dead, and had set up a golden calf to worship it. Similarly, the people of this age say, *"Where is the promise of His coming, ...for all things continue as before...* (2 Peter 3:3)?" Then Christ will come and the people will be similarly embarrassed.

16:16

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Echo: **Zechariah 12:11.** *In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.*

Note: Some doubt exists as to the exact meaning of 'Armageddon'; it may not be related to Megiddon, or Megiddo, at all. The 'Ar' at the beginning may be from 'Har' meaning 'mountain', or from 'Ir' meaning 'city'. Nevertheless, there exists sufficient popular connection to include it here. Note that Zechariah refers to it as a valley.

16:21

<u>And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven,</u> every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Echo: **Exodus 9: 23-25.** *And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.*

Note: In the plagues of Egypt we see that the Exodus is, in fact, a type of the the entire world of the last days. As noted in the comment on 16:3 and 4, the events that took place in Egypt should be seen as a solemn warning for the people of today, for the hail plague will no doubt be one of the most devastating events the world will have seen. Hail of that size does not arrive without the severest of storms; maybe the lightning too will run along the ground.

Chapter 17

17:1, 2

And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of <u>the great whore t</u>hat sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Echo: **Ezekiel 16: 28, 29.** *Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied.* *29*Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith.*

Note: In Revelation 17 the harlot, or whore (the same Hebrew word is used for both), is Babylon. There are many places in the OT where a corrupt city is described as a whore. Similarly, as in Revelation 12, God's faithful are described as a beautiful and pure woman. This and the following two chapters of Revelation, especially, Chapter 18, borrow their imagery to a large extent from four Old Testament chapters, Isaiah 47, Jeremiah 25 and 50, and Ezekiel 26.

17:3

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, <u>having seven heads and ten horns.</u>

Note: See notes on Revelation12:3 and 13:1, 2.

17:4

And the woman was arrayed in <u>purple and scarlet colour</u>, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

Echo: **Exodus 39:1, 2.** *And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. 2And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.*

Note: The Book of Exodus, in describing the sanctuary, makes many references to the colours purple and scarlet. However, the are almost never mentioned without the inclusion of the colour blue. In fact, the purple is a combination of scarlet and blue, so what is the significance of the omission of blue in the attire of the whore. Colours have meaning in the Scriptures; Scarlet is the colour of blood and represents the sanctuary sacrifice, pointing to the sacrifice of Christ upon Calvary. Hence the scarlet is seen in the Altar of the Sanctuary. Purple represents the mingling of mercy and justice in the mediatorial work of Christ as our High Priest, and therefore is seen in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary where our heavenly High Priest pleads on our behalf. Blue therefore, represents the justice of God's Law, and is seen in the Most Holy Place in which is the Ark of the Covenant containing God's Law. Thus the lack of blue in the whore's attire shows her rejection of the Law of God, her lawlessness. Those who claim to be followers of Christ, yet who reject God's Law, need to take careful heed that they are not deceived into becoming a part of the corruption of Babylon.

17:5

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, <u>BABYLON THE GREAT,</u> THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Echo: **Daniel 4:30-32.** *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? 31While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. 32And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*

Note: King Nebuchadnezzar built Babylon to his own glory as if in defiance of the God of Daniel. God's response was to make him as an animal – a beast the ruler of Babylon the Great. Now we see Babylon represented by a drunken woman sitting on the back of a beast in defiance of the God of heaven.

17:8

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the <u>bottomless pit</u>, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in <u>the book of life</u> from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Note: For Bottomless Pit, see 9:1.
For Book of Life, see 3:5b.

17:14

These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is <u>Lord of lords,</u> and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Echo: Deuteronomy 10:17. *For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:*

Echo: 1 Timothy 6:14, 15. *That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

Note: In the King James version of the Bible, the word 'LORD' is capitalized whenever the Hebrew uses the tetragrammaton (YHWH). These initials are the consonants for God's name, used because the ancient Hebrews did not write vowels; and because His name was not spoken, we do not know exactly what it is. When the vowel system was introduced, the translators used the vowels for another word for Lord, *Adonai*, and placed them into YHWH, giving us the name Jehovah, or Yahweh.

We see from these passages then, that both Jehovah and Jesus are Lord of lords. Is it possible then, that Jehovah is in fact the One who became the incarnate Jesus, who took humanity upon Himself? The nature of the Godhead is too profound for man to fully comprehend, and it has not been given us to understand such a mystery.

However, the Scriptures give clues that help us answer, at least in part, the relationship between Jesus and Jehovah. Isaiah 40: 3 reads, *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* This refers to Jehovah because the word LORD is capitalised Yet John the Baptist, specifically identified Him as Jesus: *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight* (Matthew 3:3).

Similarly, both Jehovah and Jesus refer to themselves using the same terminology; for example see Exodus 3:14, *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* Compare this with John 8:58, *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

On the other side of the equation, we note that Jehovah is referred to as God of Gods and Lord of Lords while Jesus is referred to as King of kings and Lord of lords. Perhaps this is because when Jesus took on humanity, He took it once and for all. He did not become a human only for the years of His earthly life, but is *eternally* every bit human. Perhaps His sacrifice for us involved more than we realize. We can also note that there are other New Testament passages which identify Jesus as God, for example John 1:1, Titus 2:13, and Heb 1:8 among others.

17:16

And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, <u>and shall eat her flesh</u>, and burn her with fire.

Echo: 2 Kings 9:36, 37. *This is the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the*

portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

Note: Jezebel was the pagan wife of an Israelite king who was directly responsible for turning the Israelites away from God, and to the worship of the religion of Babylon. In prophetic writings a depraved woman represents an idolatrous church, thus Jezebel provides a fitting likeness of the beast.

Chapter 18

18:2, 3

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Echo: Isaiah 13:19-21. *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 20It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. 21But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.*

Note: See also Rev 14:8. The satyr probably refers simply to a young male goat, which is the more common translation of the Hebrew word. However, the idea of a goat-like devil is in harmony with the idea of Babylon being the habitation of devils and foul spirits.

18:4, 5

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, <u>Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins</u>, and that ye receive not of her plagues. [5]For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Echo: Jeremiah 51:6. *Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompense*

Note: Once again we see Biblical history repeating itself. Israel's story is repeated again on a worldwide scale as spiritual Babylon faces its judgment. Just as God's people must have been in Babylon in order to be told to flee, so today there are many faithful who must be given the opportunity to leave before its too late. Who is the messenger? It can only be those who understand the message.

18:7

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: <u>for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.</u>

Echo: Isaiah 47:7, 8. *And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. [8]Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that*

sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

Note: In this and the following verse, God, through the prophet, directly addresses Babylon saying: *Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.*

18:8

<u>Therefore shall her plagues come in one day,</u> death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Echo: Isaiah 47:9. *But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.*

Note: As with all God's interventions, the Flood, the plagues on Egypt, and the fall of Jerusalem, although the warnings are given, those who do not heed them are taken unawares when they happen. Similarly, the destruction at the last day will come suddenly and unexpectedly. When Jesus said He would come as a thief in the night, He was not referring to stealth, but to the surprise element.

18:9 - 24

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning...,

Note: For the rest of Chapter 18, see note on Revelation 17:1, 2.

Chapter 19

19:1
And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, <u>Alleluia</u>; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

Echo: **Jeremiah 20:13.** *Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers.*

Note: The word *Alleluia* is of Hebrew origin from the words *Halal* and *Jah*, and means 'Praise the Lord'. Apart from this reference in Jeremiah, it is found throughout the psalms, especially the last ones. See also verses 4 and 6.

19:3
And again they said, Alleluia. <u>And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.</u>

Echo: **Isaiah 34:9, 10.** *And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.* ^{10}*It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

Note: This Isaiah passage refers to Idumea, the land of Edomites, the descendants of Esau. Although related to the Israelites by blood, the Edomites were traditionally enemies of Israel.

19:8

<u>And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.</u> And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

Echo: Zechariah 3:1-7. *And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. 2And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? 3Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. 4And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. 5And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by. 6And the angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying, 7Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.*

Note: In this echo, Joshua the High Priest' filthy garments are replaced by new ones, and his sinfulness is taken away. A similar story in the New Testament is found in Matthew 22:1-14, where we read the parable Christ told about the wedding banquet. In that story a king prepares a wedding banquet for

his son, and servants are dispatched with instructions to inform all the invited guests that the time for the wedding has come. But the invitees all make excuses and refuse to come; some even mishandle the messengers. In response, the king invites, in their places, the common people from the streets and alleys. Regardless of their standing in society and their code of conduct, wedding garments are given to all who wish to come.

But one man tries to attend the wedding in his own clothes and is immediately evicted. The king would not tolerate the presence of anyone not attired in the garments he has provided. So what are these garments? They are, we are told, the righteousness - or righteous deeds - of the saints; of the bride.

That our righteous works should enable us to attend the marriage supper of the Lamb is disturbing to those raised in the understanding of 'saved by grace'. Yet, there is no inconsistency, for it is still by grace that the saints receive the garment. The garment was not given in return for the righteous deeds, it just represents them. The passage does remind us however, that works, while not an entitlement to salvation, are a fruit of it, and are an integral part of the Christian way. Those who claim to follow Christ, but who think they can continue in sin because they are saved by grace have no righteous deeds to be represented by the garment. Thus they are excluded from the wedding.

19:11

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

Echo: Psalm 96:13. *...for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Note: In Revelation it is Jesus who judges in righteousness. In the Psalms it is Jehovah. The many instances in Scripture in which the characteristics of Jehovah are attributed to Christ, reveals that they are one and the same person.

19:12

<u>His eyes were as a flame of fire</u>, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

Echo: *Daniel 10:5, 6. Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.*

Note: See Rev 1:13-15

19:13

<u>And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood:</u> and his name is called The Word of God.

Echo: **Genesis 37:31, 32.** *And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; 32And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no.*

Note: Perhaps an idea rather than an echo. Many of the godly men of the Scriptures revealed the nature and work of the

Messiah. For this reason Jesus said, *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me* (John 5:39). Perhaps more than any other, Joseph was a Christ-type; his 'miracle' birth, loved by his father, his innocence, taken down to Egypt, sold as a slave, victorious in temptation, unjustly condemned, fed the multitudes. Joseph's special coat, dipped in blood, supposedly his own blood, aptly anticipates the robe of Christ's righteousness which too was to be stained by the blood of His sacrifice.

19:15

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Note: On the sharp sword see Revelation 1:16. On the rod of iron see Revelation 2:27 and 12:5.

19:16

And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Note: See Revelation 17:14.

19:17, 18

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses,

and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

Echo: Ezekiel 39:17-20. *And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood.* *18*Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. *19*And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. *20*Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD.

Note: Ezekiel's words are directed at Gog and Magog, kings who stood strongly against God's people. Similarly in Revelation 20, Gog and Magog represent all who oppose God.

Chapter 20

20:1-3
And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of <u>the bottomless pit</u> and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, *3*A***<u>nd cast him into the bottomless pit,</u> and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.***

Echo: Genesis 1:2. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*

Note: The Greek word for bottomless pit, *abussos*, is the same word used by the writers of the Septuagint, the early Greek version of the Old Testament, to describe the earth in Genesis 1:2. The word 'deep' is *abussos.* It seems then that this present earth will end up as it was in the beginning prior to God's remaking it anew without the presence of sin. In fact there is a trend in the Book of Revelation, especially in the seven trumpets and the seven plagues, that suggests that God is gradually undoing his Creation prior to creating it anew. The following explains how this might work:

Creation	*Last Days*
Day 6, Herbage as food	= Trumpet 1, vegetation destroyed
Day 5, Marine life formed	=Trumpet 2, Plague 2, Marine life dies
Day 4, Sun/moon formed	=Trumpet/Plague 4, Sun overheats
Day 3, Waters separated	=Trumpet/Plague 3, Waters to blood
Day 2, Air formed	= Plague 7, poured into the air
Day 1, Light formed	= Plague 5, Darkness
Day 0, Abyss	= Rev. 20, 1000-year Abyss.

20:4

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, <u>and judgment was given unto them</u>: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Echo: Daniel 7:22. *Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.*

Echo: **1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.** *Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

Note: The passage does not state who 'they' are who sat on the thrones, but the context would suggest it is the righteous saints to whom judgment is given, for these are the ones who live and reign with Christ for the thousand year period that Satan is in the bottomless pit, and that the unsaved are dead.

20:6

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, <u>but they shall be priests of God and of Christ,</u> and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Echo: **Exodus 19:5, 6.** *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

Note: See also Revelation 1:6.

20:8

And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, <u>Gog and Magog</u>, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Echo: **Ezekiel 38:1-4.** *And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD;*

Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: 4And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army

Note: Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39 describe the destruction of Gog (the individual) and Magog (the land). Gog is the name Ezekiel gives to a coalition of Israel's enemies. Similarly, after the millennium all the inhabitants raised in the second resurrection are described as Gog, while the desolated earth is Magog.

20:9

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and <u>compassed the camp of the saints about</u>, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Echo: Genesis 19: 4-25. *But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter... 24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.*

Echo: Luke 17:28-30. *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; 29But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. 30Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

Note: This may be stretching it a bit, but in both cases those faithful to God are surrounded by the wicked who seek their destruction. In both cases the wicked come from every quarter. In both cases it is all the people that come. In both

cases the righteous are saved and all the wicked are destroyed. If there is a lesson to be learned from this passage, is that the sin of Sodom , which brought about that city's destruction, is fast becoming the great sin of today's world. It may well be that our demand for the 'basic human right' to sexual and homosexual freedom will bring about our destruction. At best it will result in a society as dysfunctional as that of the city of Sodom. The Apostle Peter wrote these words concerning Sodom, "...*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly*" (2 Peter 2:6).

20:10

And the devil that deceived them was <u>cast into the lake of fire and brimstone</u>, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be t<u>ormented day and night for ever and ever.</u>

Echo: **Ezekiel 38:22, 23.** *And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.* *23Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

Echo: **Jude 7.** *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*

Note: See also 20:8 where Ezekiel 38 describes the destruction of Gog and Magog. They too, as the Sodomites, end their lives under a hail of fire and brimstone. These passages help us understand the meaning of 'eternal' and 'for ever and ever'. Many people have understood Revelation 20:8 as teaching

that the wicked will writhe eternally in hellfire. But this is not what the Scriptures teach; God is not a sadist; neither He nor the redeemed could enjoy the peace of heaven knowing that their unsaved loved ones were to suffer eternally for wrongs committed during a few short years. Jude tells us that Sodom and Gomorrah suffer eternal fire, but they are certainly not still ablaze. Thus these expressions tell us that they burn only as long as there is anything left to burn. Once the wicked are burned up, they are no more.

20:11, 12

And I saw a <u>great white throne,</u> and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. [12]And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; <u>and the books were opened:</u> and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Echo: Daniel 7:9, 10. *I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. [10]A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. [11]I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.*

Note: Daniel's scene is a part of a very general vision covering the entire history of the earth from Babylon until the destruction of the little horn power. John's vision specifically relates to a scene at the end of the millennium when all the unsaved are judged.

Chapter 21

21:1

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

Echo: Isaiah 65:17. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

Note: When God first created the earth, He '*saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day*' (Genesis 1:31). The story that falls between Genesis 1 and Revelation 21 is the account of sin. The millennium, a type of the seventh day, a jubilee in which the earth rests, is now passed, and a new 'week' begins. This week there will be no sin, and what God has made will remain very good.

21:2

And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Echo: Isaiah 62:5. *For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee*

Echo: Jeremiah 6:2. *I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.*

Note: Throughout the Scriptures God's faithful are referred to in terms of gender. Not less so did Jesus use the illustration of marriage to explain the kingdom of heaven. His parables of the coming bridegroom, the many mansions, even the symbolism of the Lord's Supper, were drawn from betrothal and marriage customs. The Apostle Paul also admonished Christian couples to be to their spouses as the church is to God: *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Savior of the body.* 24*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.* 25*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*..Ephesians 5:23-25.

21:3

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Echo: Zechariah 8:8. *And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.*

Echo: Leviticus 26;10. *And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.* 12*And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*

Note: This covenant promise is made repeatedly in the Old Testament, and had the people been faithful, would have had a literal fulfillment Now it is fulfilled in the New Jerusalem. God's promises never fail.

21:4

<u>And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,</u> neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Echo: Isaiah 65:17-19. *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.* [18]*But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.* [19]*And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*

Note: The Isaiah promise was conditional for the Jews. Had they remained faithful to God, the kingdom of heaven would have been ushered in long ago, and Isaiah's words would have become the words of Revelation 21. While God's promises are often frustrated by our selfishness, they are always fulfilled in the end.

21:7

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; <u>and I will be his God,</u> and he shall be my son.

Echo: Genesis 17:7. *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.* [8]*And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.* [9]*And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.*

Echo: Jeremiah 31:33, 34. *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the*

LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Note: The Genesis passage is the original covenant God made with Abraham in which He established the Father-son relationship between God and His people. The promise is repeated throughout the Scriptures, but no more strongly in Jeremiah 31 where God reminds us that even though the people have broken the covenant, and must now go into captivity, there will come a time when they will finally become the holy nation He intended them to be. This nation will be a spiritual one made up of the faithful from every nation, kindred, tongue and people. As the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapters 9 to 11, Israel, the natural olive tree, has wild branches grafted into it so that the whole tree becomes the Israel of God. These are they who are described in Jeremiah 31.

21:8

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Note: For fire and brimstone see Revelation 20:9, 10

21:12

And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

Echo: **Exodus 24:4.** *And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Note: There are several instances when Israel's leaders built altars of twelve pillars. For example Joshua also built such an altar in the Jordan River when they first crossed into the Promised Land. The twelve tribes of Revelation are identified in Chapter 7, but it will be noted that they are not exactly the same as the actual tribes of Israel. For example, in Revelation 7 the tribe of Dan is omitted, and the tribes of Joseph and his son Manasseh are both included, while his son Ephraim is not.

21:13, 14

<u>On the east three gates</u>; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Echo: **Ezekiel 48:31-34.** *And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel: three gates northward; one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi.* [32]*And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan.* [33]*And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun.* [34]*At the west side four thousand and five hundred, with their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali.*

Note: This description comes from a vision given to Ezekiel of the Temple which is very similar to the description given in Revelation. Ezekiel's temple was never built.

21:15

<u>And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof,</u> and the wall thereof.

Echo: **Ezekiel 40:3-6.** *And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate... and in the man's hand a measuring reed of six cubits long by the cubit and an hand breadth: so he measured the breadth of the building, one reed; and the height, one reed.* 6 *Then came he unto the gate which looketh toward the east, and went up the stairs thereof, and measured the threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad; and the other threshold of the gate, which was one reed broad.*

Echo: **Zechariah 2:1-2.** *I lifted up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold a man with a measuring line in his hand.* 2 *Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof.*

Note: See also Revelation 11:1 for a reference to measuring the temple. Now the measurements are taken of the New Jerusalem which, we will later find, has no temple. See also comment on Revelation 11:1.

21:16

<u>And the city lieth foursquare</u>, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

Echo: **Ezekiel 48:19, 20.** And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel. 20All the oblation shall be five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city.

Note: There are several items in the Hebrew Scriptures that are foursquare; the altar of sacrifice, the altar of incense, and the breastplate worn by the High Priest. All these are related to the temple and to worship. However, the loudest echo of this passage is found in Ezekiel's temple which he saw in vision. In this vision, the entire city, Jerusalem, is laid out in foursquare with each side representing three of the twelve tribes. This layout was also found in the wilderness where the twelve tribes were encamped about the tabernacle, three on each side. In this way the nation of Israel anticipated what was to occur in the heavenly city.

Ezekiel's temple was never built, and the city itself never came to be. Undoubtedly, this vision was conditional upon the obedience of the people; had they been faithful, and had the Messiah been accepted when He came, this temple and city would have been built.

21:18-21

And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. 21And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

Echo: **Exodus 28:16-21:** *Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes.*

Note: The precious stones found in the Holy City allude to the description of the breastplate worn by the high priest in the temple. There are important similarities between the two. The Breastplate's full name was the Breastplate of Judgment, or Decision, as it also held the Urim and the Thummim, the stones God had Moses place on it so that he could reveal His will to the people. Thus it was through the Breastplate that God revealed His divine will. Perhaps the Breastplate, being a type of the foundation of the Holy City represented the will, or the divine justice, of God. In that sense the foundation of the Holy City is divine justice, where God's will is supreme. *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10).

21:27

And there shall in no wise enter into it <u>any thing that defileth</u>, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Echo: **Isaiah 52:1.** *Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.*

Note: Both John and Isaiah pictured the city God had planned for those who will live there victorious. Isaiah's vision could have been fulfilled had the Israelites been faithful, and had the Messiah been welcomed. However much we frustrate God's promises, they will finally be fulfilled.

Chapter 22

22:1

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Echo: Genesis 2:8-10. *And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. 10And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.*

Note: As the Garden of Eden originally had a river flowing in the midst of it, so the new earth has a river. The following verse, 22:2, suggests that Eden will be restored, along with the Tree of Life. Revelation makes no mention of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, which probably will be no longer there.

22:2

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and

yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Echo: **Ezekiel 47:1-12.** *Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.* 8*Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed.* 9*And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.* 10*And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many.* 11*But the miry places thereof and the marshes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt.* 12*And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.*

Note: It seems from this passage that had the Israelites been faithful to the Covenant, God would have restored the earth to its original state through different means than those He will use at the end time. However, the end result would have been the same.

22:4
And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Echo: Exodus 33:20-23. *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 21And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: 22And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: 23And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*

Echo: Exodus 13:16. *Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.*

Echo: Exodus 28:36-38. *And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. 38And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.*

Note: Moses, as a fallen and therefore unholy man, could not see God's face without being destroyed by the glory of it. But redeemed man will be able to see God's glory because, as Job says, *"... he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness* (Job 33:26).

Aaron was instructed to wear on his forehead a gold plate with the words, *HOLINESS TO THE LORD* engraved on it. The word 'LORD' when in capitals is the name of God, Jehovah. Thus Aaron, as High Priest, literally wore God's name on his forehead so that the unholiness of the people may be interceded for through the priestly ministry, and their gifts, given with unholy hands, may be acceptable to God.

22:5

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Echo: **Isaiah 60: 19, 20.** *The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.* *20* *Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

Note: See notes on 21:7 and 22:2.

22:10

And he saith unto me, <u>Seal not the sayings</u> of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

Echo: **Daniel 12:4.** *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased* .

Note: John is told not to seal the words of the book of Revelation. This is in strong contrast to Daniel who was told to seal them. Daniel was told that his writings would be understood at the time of the end. Now we have reached that time, and John is told not to seal his book. *Revelation* is a book that Christ wishes all to know and understand.

22:12

And, behold, I come quickly; <u>and my reward is with me,</u> to give every man according as his work shall be.

Echo: **Isaiah 40:9, 10.** *O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! 10Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.*

Note: Once *again* we see the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

22:13
I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, <u>the first and the last.</u>

Echo: **Isaiah 44:6.***Thus saith the LORD the* King *of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*

Echo: **Isaiah 48:12.** *Hearken unto me, O Jacob* and *Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

Note: See Revelation 1:17.

22:14
Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, <u>and may enter in through the gates into the city.</u>

Echo: **Psalm 100.** *Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his*

presence with singing. 3Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Note: The Psalm refers to the earthly sanctuary and Revelation refers to the New Jerusalem. However, the sentiment expressed in the Psalm describes exactly the feelings of those who are invited to enter the gates of the New Jerusalem.

22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Echo: **John 4:14.** *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Echo: **John 7:37, 38.** *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

Note: The reference to the Scripture in John 7:38 may be to Isaiah 58:11, *And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.* Jesus' invitation of John 4:14 was made during the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast which celebrated the time when God will once again dwell with man as He did

before the Fall. See 1:7 for a description of this important incident.

22:20, 21
He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.